

Animals & Men

The Journal of the Centre for Fortean Zoology



MOLLY THE SINGING OYSTER; A
PLETHORA OF PANGOLINS; MYSTERY
CATS IN YORKSHIRE; THE BARKING
BEAST OF BATH; MOBY THE GREAT
SPERM WHALE AND MORE...

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THE GREAT DAYS OF ZOOLOGY ARE NOT DONE...

Dear Friends,

Welcome to another issue of 'Animals & Men'. We are now well into our fourth year and despire what Graham misquotes (via a Billy Bunter story) as 'The wings and Sparrows of *Outrageous Fortune*' we are still going relatively strong.

Finally both the 1997 Yearbook and my book 'The *Owman and Others*' are now available. We apologise profusely to everyone who has been waiting for their copies to arrive. However, with the release of this issue our time-line is now back on schedule for the first time since Alison left last July.

We also now have a fortnightly radio show, however unless you can get BBC Radio Devon you are going to be unlikely to receive it. We broadcast every other tuesday afternoon from 2.00 to 2.30 and the show is called 'Weird about The West'. Various names familiar to regular readers of this magazine have appeared on the show to date, including Darren Naish, Trevor Beer, Chris Moiser, Tony Shiels, and Richard Freeman as well as other folk from non cryptozoological areas of the fortean universe.

The *Animals & Men* posse has also been visible recently on television, most notably when I, together with Sally Parsons, Richard Muirhead, Richard Freeman, Al Pringle and Darren Naish appeared on a rather fine little discussion programme called 'For the love of ...Cryptozoology'. In an swer to all those who asked --- no I wasn't out of my proverbial tree, I just had flu (and a slight hangover).

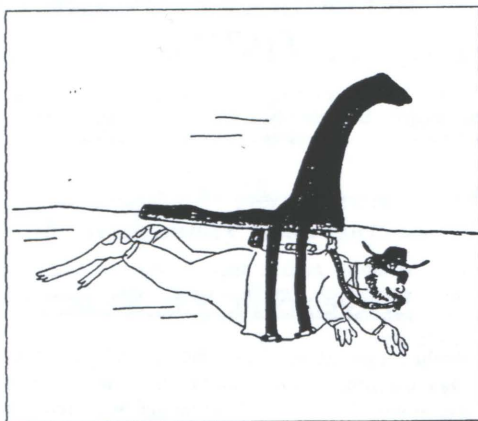
I would like to take this opportunity to thank someone who, above all, has not only got me through the trials and tribulations of the last horrible

twelve months, but whose tireless efforts have managed to save the CFZ and convert it into something with a slight semblance of efficiency about it. Graham Inglis is not only a valued colleague but a very dear friend, and he does what he does for very little reward. I would also like to congratulate him for having been elected as the Chairman of the Exeter Greenpeace Support Group. What with this and his editorship of the nascent *Greenscene* newsletter as well as his activities with the CFZ and with our sister magazine 'The *Goblin Universe*' (which he edits with me), I feel sure that his days of media obscurity are fast coming to a close and that we are approaching a new era in which he shall get the recognition that he undoubtedly deserves.

We shall be out and about at several events this summer and look forward to meeting as many of you as we can. We have a large number of exciting new projects just about to start, and now we are finally up to date we shall be announcing our next generation of activities over the next few months..

Until then,
best wishes,

Jon D





NEWSFILE

curling. *Aberdeen Evening Express* 24 Mar 97

West Lothian, Scotland

EDITED AND COMPILED BY
GRAHAM INGLIS WITH THE
OCCASIONAL
INTERJECTION BY THE
EDITOR.

Margaret McCord saw an animal resembling a large black cat whilst she was out with her pony. She described the animal as being 'definitely not a fox' and was apparently frightened that it would maul her pony. *Scotland on Sunday* 12.1.97

MYSTERY CATS

Lossiemouth, N.E. Scotland

Architect Stuart Matthews and his wife reported a 'black panther' as they drove on a village road to Garmouth. The 5 ft (1.5 m) animal appeared from trees 200 yards ahead and bounded across the road. The couple described the tail as long and



London.

What was described as a 'mountain lion' has been reported by various witnesses living wild along a railway track in West London. Doug Richardson from London Zoo was reported as saying: *"Railway land would suit it perfectly. It would be undisturbed and have a plentiful food supply"*. In the wake of the recent US Government denials about the Roswell Incident, however we tend to look with somewhat a jaundiced eye at official denials or endorsements! *Daily Sport* July 17 1996.

West Yorkshire.

A mystery animal dubbed 'wildcat of the wolds' has been spotted over the past few years as far afield as Goole, Beeford, Bilton, Driffeld and Holme-on-Spalding-Moor. During the summer of 1996 the animals started to appear in the Walkington area where a couple who, for some reason, remain nameless were frightened by an animal the size of a great dane, as their car turned off the motorway at North Cave. A corpse was reported as having been found with "the head and ears of a cat, the body of a dog, and fearsome teeth and claws". *Hull Daily Mail* 27.8.96

EDITORIAL COMMENT: What happened to the corpse is unrecorded, although we feel sure that if it had been anything of significance we should have heard about it.

At least two other corpses of supposedly mystery cats were found during the past twelve months. The first, from Cornwall early last summer turned out to be that of a dog of unspecified breed, and the second, which according to some sources, including the North Devon naturalist Nigel Brierley is supposed to be that of an African wildcat (*F.lybica*). No evidence has been presented to us in support of this claim, and we feel unable to accept this record until we receive concrete proof.

LAKE AND SEA MONSTERS



Central Russia has its own version of the Loch Ness Monster, according to the news agency Itar-TASS. Sightings from Twer of a 5 m long creature with an elongated neck, in Lake Brosno, have been attributed to a prehistoric reptile. *Kolner Express* 12 Dec 96

MAN BEASTS AND BHM HAIR TODAY...

Wes Summerlin, a self-styled Bigfoot hunter from California claims to have secured hair samples from the mystery hominid. They were given to Ohio State University researchers for DNA analysis. So far there is no news.



ATTACKS

An 80-year-old Lincolnshire woman needed surgery after being attacked by a 15-stone seal. It injured her leg as she walked along a coastal path through a nature reserve near Mablethorpe. It is thought the pensioner disturbed the seal with a pup. *Southampton Daily Echo* 28 Nov 96

SIMIAN STUPIDITY

The Mayor of Boston and other dignitaries holding an impromptu news conference at the city's Franklin Park Zoo were bombarded by missiles made from straw and droppings and thrown at them by a young gorilla who obviously didn't think much of politicians. *Aberdeen Press and Journal* 30.1.97

SIMIAN SADNESS (OR SHOULD THAT BE SLAUGHTER)

Vets in the Philippines killed over six hundred

monkeys at a breeding farm because of a scare over Ebola virus. *Aberdeen Press and Journal* 30.1.97

I THOUGHT I SAW A PUDDY CAT

Finnish farmer Erkki Turunen, of Eno in western Finland, tried to stop a wolf grabbing his pet cat. He grabbed the cat's tail and entered into a bizarre tug of war situation with the ravening wolf who, (as was pretty obvious) won the competition and ate the cat. *Aberdeen Press and Journal* 30.1.97

SEE YOU LATER ALLIGATOR

A Brazilian boy was saved by his parents from the jaws of an alligator after he fell into the water at the Shark Valley nature trail in Florida. They waded into the water to beat off the creature that had attacked their child. It was reportedly the first attack on a human since the park first opened in 1947. *St Louis Post-Dispatch* via COUdi 17.7.96; *USA Today* 16.7.96 via COUdi.

... IN A WHILE CROCODILE

In a bizarre case, which both mirrors the last story and proves that the American legal system is fundamentally unsound the mother of a nine year old girl who was attacked by a Florida alligator, is to sue the dead beast (killed by her husband) for a million dollars.

The little girl was badly scared in the attack. "Courtney had nightmares for a while", her mother said.

"She was scared, even later that day she was still shaking. Any of my kids will now tell you that alligators are bad!"

Her husband shot the beast and is now being sued for having unlawfully killed an animal of an endangered species. Mrs Novacs, citing an obscure

endangered species. Mrs Novacs, citing an obscure piece of litigation involving Loggerhead Turtles claims that the state Game and Freshwater Fish Commission is responsible for injuries and traumas caused by endangered species under their jurisdiction.

Jim Anista, the general counsel for the state agency claims that they are not responsible for the actions of wild beasts. "Either she has to sue us directly" he said, "or else the alligator has to go out and get itself a lawyer"

The alligator is dead! (Are dead reptiles eligible for legal aid?) *Atlanta Journal Oct 20 1996.*

Who Killed Bambi?

A rare white stag, one of only a few in Scotland, has been shot and then decapitated, probably by a trophy hunter. The stag was a favourite attraction at Glengoulandie Deer Park. *Aberdeen Press & Journal 23 Jan 97*

WHO'S AFRAID OF THE BIG BAD...

A student playing the part of the Big Bad Wolf was shot and injured on stage after no-one bothered to check whether the gun used by the hunter who comes to the rescue of Little Red Riding Hood, in a Brazilian performance of the pantomime, was loaded. *Aberdeen Press and Journal 18.9.96*

TALKING TURKEY

A wild turkey crashed through the windscreen of a truck as it drove down Interstate 79. "It scared the hell out of me" said the driver, "He was still alive. He must have had a rush of adrenalin. He was looking around and he stared at me for a while". The driver climbed into the back of his truck to try and dislodge the wounded turkey which began to

hiss and struggle before it finally fled through the hole in the broken windscreen. "He's on the loose in Pittsburgh someplace" said the driver, who swore that he would never eat Turkey at Thanksgiving again! *St Louis Post Dispatch via COUdi 19.12.96*

BEEES MEAN BUSINESS

A swarm of killer bees attacked a group of farmers in central Costa Rica killing one man and injuring several others. In a scenario somewhat reminiscent of a particularly unpleasant 1980s B Movie, the creatures were reported to be a fearsome African species which escaped from a laboratory in Brazil some twenty years ago and have now spread across much of South America and some of the southern states of the United States. *St Louis Post Dispatch via COUdi 24.3.96*

The steady spread northwards of these bees was predicted in Arthur Herzog's book "The Swarm", published in, I believe, 1979.

Later in the year it was reported that similar creatures had been terrorising parts of Los Angeles (this is beginning to sound more like a B Movie than ever), and the newspaper reports said that the LAPD were receiving special training. (Cue a joke about 'honey traps'). They also note that the species first arrived in the USA in Texas during 1990. *USA Today Via COUdi 6.6.96*

NO FACETIOUS PUN FROM THE EDITOR COULD POSSIBLY DO JUSTICE TO THIS RIDICULOUS STORY!!!

According to the ITAR-Tass news agency, a man and some friends were ice fishing on a reservoir some sixty miles from Moscow when he caught a 28 inch pike. Showing off he raised the fish high and kissed it on the mouth. The pike clamped down hard on the fisherman's nose.

The pike's jaws were clamped hard on the man's nose even after his companions beheaded it. Doctors at a local hospital set him free. *Boston Globe* Dec 13th 1995.

WHALE MEAT AGAIN

Two southern right whales charged at a shark net and ripped it apart in order to save their calf who was entangled in it in the sea off Durban in South Africa. Mike Manning (no relation to Zodiac Mindwarp) said "I was a few yards away. The young one had been caught by its tail and had been making a lot of noise, blowing in and out of its blow-hole. The two adults were trying all sorts of things but eventually both of them charged the net, ripping it apart and freeing the youngster". People watching from the beach wanted to intervene to save the calf but in the end its parents did it themselves. *Aberdeen Press and Journal* 4.11.96

OUT OF PLACE

IF YOU'RE GOING TO SAN FRANSISCO

A baby alligator or perhaps caiman which was residing in San Francisco's Mountain Lake became a figurative pawn in the never-ending publicity war between the two rival newspapers of the city. *The Examiner* ran a 'Name that Gator' competition, and so in the next round of the ratings war the *Chronicle* hired a professional alligator hunter from Florida to hunt the beast. The Examiner retaliated by claiming that the hunter was a veritable reptile 'hit man' and hired a scuba diver to protect the beast. The police turned him away because of a local bye law forbidding

swimming in the lake.

The San Francisco Boys Chorus got in on the act and turned up on the muddy banks of the lake to croon 'Puff The Magic Dragon' in a vain attempt to lure the rogue reptile to the surface. *The Chronicle* started a 'Gator Watch' and the *Examiner* announced that they were consulting a psychic.

The San Francisco Zoo who were officially hunting the animal withdrew their capture team in order to avoid the stupid publicity, and announced that they were stopping searching "until the commotion subsides". Meanwhile a photograph showing something looking remarkably like an iguana swimming behind a duck, and captioned "Alligator - or possibly Caiman - pursues lunch in Mountain Lake" proves that the missing creature - whatever it is, seems happy, healthy and unconcerned at his new found fame. *L.A. Times* 9.3.96

EURO-ROO (1)

After spending two years in the wild in forests in Belgium, a kangaroo is now recovering from frostbite at Antwerp zoo. The animal tried hard to avoid capture. How an animal indigenous to Australia came to be living in Belgium remains a mystery. *Westfalenpost* 18 Jan 97

EURO-ROO (2)

An escaped pet described as a 'little kangaroo' was caught by police near Hamburg. The species is not noted but it is corroborative evidence for the burgeoning populations of 'wild' red necked wallabies being found across Britain and northern Europe. *Westfalenpost* January 18th 1997.

WHITE WHALE

A Beluga whale was in danger of becoming stranded at Thurso in the Orkney Islands during September 1996.

The fears proved groundless as the animal eventually made its way towards the open sea.
Aberdeen Press and Journal 10.9.97

SEAL'D WITH A KISS (1)

A lost seal pup was discovered basking amongst fishing boats in a Dorset harbour - 2,000 miles from its Arctic home in northern Canada. The one year old silver harp seal was netted by fishermen after pulling himself onto a pontoon in Poole. The seal was taken to the National Seal Sanctuary at Gweek in Cornwall from where staff hoped that they would be able to release him into the wild.
Teletext on 3 (Meridian News Pages) p.337 27th Jan 1997.



SEAL'D WITH A KISS (2)

A baby seal from the North Atlantic turned up on a beach in the American Virgin Islands. The seven month old Hooded Seal, usually a denizen of cold, northern waters was then sent to a sanctuary in Puerto Rico.
Aberdeen Press and Journal 9.9.96

EDITOR'S NOTE: It is interesting how many Arctic pinnipeds, and indeed cetaceans, are

now turning up in British and southern European waters. This is at least the second Harp Seal in the last twelve months and there was also a record of a Hooded Seal last year. Recent sightings of what is almost certainly a humpback whale off St. Ives are also, we believe, significant. Whether these changes in distribution are the result of climactic change or other environmental conditions, or whether (to use a totally non-scientific but probably very forteen expression) they are just 'one of those things' remains to be seen. The 'real' mystery is WHY DO ALL THESE SIGHTINGS GET REPORTED IN THE ABERDEEN PRESS AND JOURNAL AND APPARENTLY NOWHERE ELSE?

The return of the Multicoloured Frogs

Unusually-coloured frogs in southern England seem to be flourishing, despite their inherent inability to blend in with their surroundings. Colours ranging from orange to yellow have been seen, as has cream and pale pink. The frogs are thought to be albinos that lack their normal dark green pigmentation, and display whatever 'secondary' colour happens to be in their genetic make-up.

With no dark pigments to help them absorb the sun's energy, their development is slowed. However, more than a third of these colourful frogs are being seen in the sunny south-west of England. It has been suggested that global warming may be assisting the survival of what otherwise would be an unviable mutation.
Daily Mail 12 Mar 97.

A LAD IN CRANE

A northern European crane was spotted at Sandhaven in Scotland last autumn. This particular specimen which was on its own's sex is unknown and was seen at a small pond near the village of Buchan.
Aberdeen Press and Journal 18.9.1996.

THE ADVENT OF THE EUROMOTHS

A colony of rare moths has been discovered in southern England. Southern chestnut moths, normally found in warmer countries such as Italy and North Africa, have been found in the New Forest, Hampshire. The area contains lowland heather, which the larvae feed upon. Central France is the closest the moths normally come to Britain. *Southampton Daily Echo* 7 Dec 96

Researchers in China say they have found the remains of a specimen of the first bird to have a beak and true feathers. The remains have been dated to about 140 m.y.a. - the Jurassic era. The bird, standing 28 cm (12 in) tall, has been named *Confuciusornis sanctus*. *The Toronto Star* 19 Oct 96.

The phalarope, a wading bird common in the USA, has an unusual method of obtaining food during times of shortage. It spins around, once per second, creating a vortex in the water that lifts food particles from the bottom, for the bird to peck from the water surface. Each revolution requires 7 or 8 kicks. *The Boston Globe* 19 Nov 96

Hong Kong's pink dolphins are under threat from pollution and could be extinct in a few years, experts have warned. It is believed that only 80 are left, falling victim to pollution from rapid industrial expansion and the development of coastal schemes such as the new airport, new road and rail schemes, and an oil pipeline.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) has warned that drastic measures are needed to save the pink dolphin. With the handover of Hong Kong to the Chinese about to occur, any such rescue will primarily be down to the Chinese. *Daily Mail* 31 Dec 96

EDITOR'S NOTE: The new development at Chep Lap Kok, which will not be completed

until well after the British leave the territory is a controversial one from an ecological point of view. An entire island has been levelled and a massive amount of land reclamation has taken place.

When one remembers that the channel connecting Stonecutter's Island to the mainland has also been filled in the effects on the water circulation in Hong Kong harbour must be nothing short of catastrophic. It will be unlikely to our minds at least, if the 'pink dolphin' is not the only marine casualty of this so-called progress.

When one remembers the furore surrounding the extension of Kai Tak aerodrome some three decades or more ago, one hates to think what this new development will do to the feng shui of the region. JD

NEW AND REDISCOVERED



SEAL OF APPROVAL

A community of landlocked harbour seals living in northern Quebec has been studied by Professor Dave Lavigne of the University of Guelph. No-one is sure how this saltwater species came too live separately in *Lacs des Loups Marin*. The most popular theory is that they were trapped during the last ice age, 8,000 years ago. *Toronto (?) Globe and Mail* 4.12.96

COLOSSAL FOSSIL

A gardener in Australia who took delivery of some sandstone boulders for his rockery was hosing them down when he noticed the outline of a fossil emerging from one. He contacted Dr Stephen Godfrey, a Canadian palaeontologist who was visiting Sydney for a dinosaur exhibition. The Triassic fossil is of a 6.5 ft (2 m) amphibian that looks like a cross between a crocodile and a worm, possibly a brachyopid, and dates from about 230 my.a.

Dr Godfrey commented after his local call-out. "I've had to go to the far ends of the earth to examine some fossils, and here I was in a friendly old fellow's garden with his wife bringing out tea and scones." *Daily Mail* 15 Feb 97

A FISHY STORY

An enormous fish weighing 303lbs and with a total length of 96 inches was caught in the Gambia River. The fish was described as a 'toppen'. According to the report in an unnamed English language Gambian newspaper (Feb/Mar 1997) 'toppen' are an Atlantic ocean species which makes its presence in a river somewhat unlikely. One can only speculate that 'toppen' is a misnomer for 'tarpon', but even so its presence in Gambian fresh or even estuarine waters would seem to be somewhat of a zoological mystery.

EVERYBODY'S GOT SOMETHING TO HIDE...

Scientists from Hanover University, Germany, have rediscovered a monkey believed to be extinct in Madagascar, off the east coast of Africa. With a mass of only 80 grams, the hairy-eared dwarf lemur (*Allocebus trichotis*) is one of the smallest monkeys in the world. Mainly nocturnal, they inhabit the still-largely-untouched rainforests. However, humans are making their mark: when Europeans first arrived on Madagascar, there were 45 native species of monkey there. Now there are less than 35. *Die Welt* 7 Jan 97

NEW CRAB

A new species of crab with a multicoloured shell has been discovered in rivers near the town of Chiang Mai in northern Thailand. Because of its attractive carapace it has been named the 'elegant mountain crab'. *Westfalenpost* November 14th 1996.

WEIRD SCIENCE

TRIPLE RAMMY

A sheep has given birth to triplets - each by a different father. One lamb has the white face of its Dutch Texel sire, another is a pink-complexioned Charollais, while the third is a black-faced Suffolk. They were born in Norfolk. *Aberdeen Evening Express* 24 Jan 97

Oh no.. not those dinosaurs again!

The sudden extinction of the dinosaurs and many plant species 65 million years ago - the so-called Cretaceous Event - is widely believed to have been caused by a meteor, an asteroid larger than Mount Everest, slamming into the Earth's crust. Now,

Israeli scientists have suggested that it was cosmic radiation that bombarded the Earth - after 2 neutron stars (pulsars) collided, creating a deadly wave of radiation that destroyed the protective layers of the Earth's atmosphere. *The Toronto Star* 3 Dec 96

Bees can fly

It has almost been considered axiomatic in physics that bees shouldn't be able to fly - their wings are too small. The wings of aeroplanes and birds are shaped so that the air takes longer to pass over the curved top surface than to pass underneath: this differential airflow 'sucks' the wing upwards, i.e. generates lift. A bee's wings, though, are virtually flat, and shouldn't be able to lift the mass of the body. Now a research group at Cambridge University has shown that insect wings generate turbulence - small vortices - on the top surfaces. These vortices effectively increase the wing thickness, so far as the main air motion is concerned - to the extent that the radically differential airflow generates enough lift. *The Daily Mail* 19 Dec 96

STRANGE STORIES

RETURN OF THE NATIVE

Various British animals once regarded as in need of protection are reportedly re-emerging as pests. Otter, badger and raven populations have recovered sufficiently in some areas for some observers to now describe them as 'the scourge of the countryside'. Inflexibility of British conservation laws is being blamed: once protection is bestowed, it is very hard to revoke. A species no longer in danger can multiply unchecked and, say some landowners, get out of control. Official culls have been suggested as a solution. Reports suggest that many farmers undertake

illegal raids against protected animals that mount raids on their farms. And some of the racing pigeon fraternity reportedly feed their ageing pigeons poison capsules and then send them out when birds of prey are around.

Their prey will come...

Some more obscure direct action was undertaken by some pigeon enthusiasts against a peregrine that was preying on their prize birds: an ageing pigeon was sent aloft with a small explosive device attached, which went off when the peregrine struck. *The Times* 11 Oct 96

OTTER THAN JULY

In an interesting correlation to the above story, it appears that as the native British otter recovers its population numbers in the north of England, the numbers of American mink are declining. It also appears that the resurgence of the native species is also helping the recovery of another native species - the water vole. A survey of otter numbers in Northumberland showed signs of the presence of the animals at 70% of the sites visited as opposed to 23% only four years earlier. *The Times* 27.12.96

STOP THE PIGEON

A homing pigeon has turned up in Moscow after flying 1500 miles in the wrong direction. It was released from Nantes, France, and was expected to fly the 250 miles to its loft in Hampshire. Instead, it arrived safe and well in Russia more than 2 years later. *Meridian Teletext* On 3, 29 Jan 97

NEWSFILE CORRESPONDENTS

Tom Anderson, Wolfgang Schmidt, Gypsy Sherrid, Sally Parsons, The Cryptic Clipper of Mannic Publications, Gene Duplantier, Chris Moiser.

READ ALL
ABOUT IT!



NEWSFILE EXTRA

'MOBY' THE SPERM WHALE

EDITOR'S NOTE: It is one of the truisms of fortune thinking that a single event can have an infinite number of interpretations. A recent example is the arrival and subsequent demise of a hapless sperm whale in Scotland's Firth of Forth. Here we present two differing viewpoints of the affair. Firstly from Tony 'Doc' Shiels of the Sea Head Artists Gang (S.H.A.G)

"Funny, wouldn't you say, that a sperm whale turns up in the Firth of Forth (plus his pals) just a week or so after S.H.A.Gster Sinbad was in those Celtic coastal parts? Also S.H.A.Gster Kevin McGlue was making and shaping Sea Head stuff in the Firth of Forth just a few months (more or less) back.

EDITOR'S NOTE: See Fortean Times May 1997.

And they call it 'Moby'! AND the last time a great sperm was seen in those waters was 1977, around the time that (check the records). Consider these things good shipmate.

Thar she blows,
Tony"

The second interpretation comes from our intrepid Caledonian Correspondent, Tom Anderson:

"March 20th Firth of Forth.

A fifteen metre sperm whale beached itself at South Queensferry beside the Forth Road Bridge, the main north/south artery to Edinburgh.

By the morning of the 21st it had freed itself but, obviously in some distress, was moving upstream instead of seawards. A further three were seen downstream and it was thought that the spring tides had confused them on their migration from the arctic to the Azores. It was monitored all day by scientists in a boat, and sonar readings suggested that it was not yet in a critical stage of anxiety.



All attempts to drive it back under the bridge failed as traffic noise apparently frightened it. As the Forth is a busy industrial waterway it was thought that tanker traffic contributed to its disorientation. By now it was in water depth of ten to twenty metres.

B.P. postponed a tanker's departure from a nearby terminal and it was proposed to limit vehicle speeds on the bridge to light noise levels. By now a flotilla of eleven craft were attempting to shepherd the whale downstream. Finally, late on the 22nd it made sonar contact with a member of the pod a mile away. It immediately turned and made for the mouth of the estuary but again ran aground for a further six hours before finally reaching open water. It then returned on the 29th, again stranded itself, and died of suffocation.

The reasons why this pod migrated down the east coast instead of the usual west are as yet unknown.

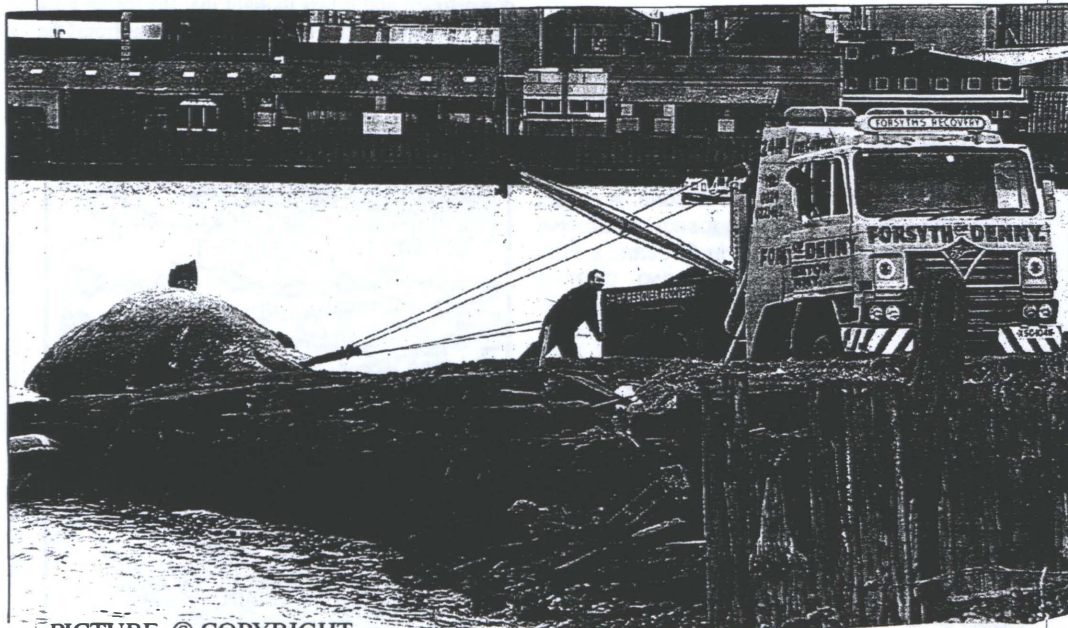
A growing body of opinion blame the oil industry's seismic explorations west of Shetland, citing previous strandings on the Belgian coast (the first since the 1700's).

This could explain the influx of previously rare cetaceans seen during the last year off the northern isles.

Further displacement down the east coast and an inability to migrate westwards south of the mainland would inevitably lead to a nil population growth for the foreseeable future.

The North Sea oil industry has a minimum projected lifespan of twenty-five years.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For further records of Sperm Whales stranded on the east coast of Scotland see A&M9 and for records from Norfolk during the last fifteen years see the 1997 Yearbook!



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LIBERATION FRONT

A PLETHORA OF PANGOLINS

EDITORIAL NOTE: As has become our custom we are devoting a section of this issue to a selection of short articles about the same animal. This issue we look at pangolins. This was started by Richard Freeman who whilst staying with me at New Year mentioned that his grandparents had heard a rumour of a pangolin on the loose in the West Midlands. This spurred my editorial interest into action, and although Richard's pangolin turned out to be something completely different, this didn't stop, Tom Anderson, Karl Shuker, Clinton Keeling and even your humble editor getting in on the act...

The Pangolin that never was by Richard Freeman

(Yorkshire representative of the CFZ investigating events in Warwickshire!)

My home town of Nuneaton is possibly the most un-mysterious and non-forean place in England. If places like Warminster or Dyfed are 'hotspots' or 'window areas'. Nuneaton is the centre for sheer blandness.

It has had but a single Crypto-incident. In 1976 a 'Black Panther' was seen prowling around the Bermuda area of the town. Police with loud-hailers warned people to stay in their homes. Of course, the whole populace of Bermuda went out immediately and prodded every bush in site with sticks. Needless to say the 'panther' (if it ever existed) disappeared without a trace. Apart from

the area becoming known as the Bermuda triangle' for a while that was Nuneaton's only brush with Cryptozoology, until now.

Upon arriving home from Leeds for the Christmas holidays (1996) I was somewhat surprised to hear from my grandparents that a bizarre animal had been spotted on the outskirts of Dullsville. Apparently a local paper (they could not remember which one) had run a story about a month ago stating that a woman had seen a ant-eater like animal. My grandparents were sure it was not an ant-eater though, but something like one.

I ran past them the names of all the animals that could possibly be mistaken for anteaters. Aardvark?, Armadillo? Pangolin? To my extreme surprise "Pangolin" met with the affirmative!.

Pangolins must vie with Echidnas for the title of the weirdest mammals in the world. Once believed to be Edentates (toothless mammals) - the group that contains, ardvarks, armadillos, sloths and ant-eaters. Pangolins have now been reclassified into a group of their own and zoological arguments rage over their relationships to other animals.

Visually they look more like reptiles than mammals, with their covering of scales. One could also mistake them for giant animated pine cones. Seven species are found in tropical Africa and Asia. I have never seen one in the flesh, either in captivity or in my time in East Africa.

I suppose that they could be raised on a diet similar to that of ant-eaters in captivity. This consists of minced meat, egg, formic acid and insect eater supplement.

In the wild, pangolins feed on termites and ants, so the frozen winter ground would be a hinderance to any running free in Britain. Apparently, however, Pangolins can endure extreme cold. I was talking to the proprietor of 'The Pangolin Bookshop' in Hebdon Bridge, Yorkshire last year and enquired how the shop got its name.

She told me that when she had lived in Africa (Zimbabwe, I think), she knew a taxidermist there who wanted to stuff pangolins. Unfortunately he found them impossible to kill due to their armoured hide. In desperation he tried freezing them alive by leaving them overnight in a freezer! Luckily (for the pangolins) they were all still alive the next day. The taxidermist's cruel plan didn't work. Pangolins, it seems, are very hardy beasts.



So, it was theoretically possible for pangolins to survive in Britain. But if it was a pangolin, where in God's name had it come from? No local zoos kept them. (As far as I know, they are not kept in ANY British zoo). It seemed very unlikely that they were being sold as pets by unscrupulous animal dealers. Perhaps they had teleported?

I spent the next few days in the local newspaper offices 'trawling' through their back issues. After sifting through a mountain of twee local 'news' (SHOCK! Woman loses Pencil!), I finally came upon the story.

The animal in question was not a pangolin, nor was it an anteater, nor anything even remotely like one. In fact, it turned out not to be any kind of placental mammal - it was a marsupial called a bandicoot.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: See A&M12).

Bandicoots are marsupials of the family *Peramblidae* and *Thylacomyidae* (Rabbit

Bandicoots). They are insect eating animals which resemble the hypothetical outcome of a night of passionate miscegenation between a rabbit, a rat and an enormous shrew! There are eighteen types, including Gunn's Bandicoot, The Brown Bandicoot and the Spiny Bandicoot.

The story (in all its sparse detail) runs thus:

A local woman saw the animal in Hartshill Hayes, a large stretch of woodland that supports quite a variety of wildlife. The later identified it as a Bandicoot, and reported it to a radio programme. The newspapers then picked up the trail! It was printed on November 15th 1996 in the 'HARTLAND EVENING NEWS'. Unfortunately she failed to leave either a name or telephone number with either the radio station or the newspaper. The reporter who wrote up the story, John Ellis, believed that she was frightened of ridicule. The whole thing was frustratingly vague.

The newspaper folk saw fit to ask the opinion of an 'expert'. They decided to approach Molly Badham, the director of Twycross Zoo. In her 'learned opinion' Marsupials could not survive in Britain and Bandicoots had never been imported into the country. Anyone thinking that Britain is too cold for marsupials should remember these are warm blooded animals and that there are several breeding colonies of Red Necked Wallabies (and possibly other related species) in Britain. Although true bandicoots are insectivorous, and winter would therefore be a hard time for them, they are also known to eat small mammals which are plentiful in the woods at Hartshill Hayes. These woods back onto a number of gardens where these animals would be able to scavenge for domestic rubbish from dustbins. Bandicoots are formidable little mammals and could 'hold their own' against domestic cats.

As for none ever being imported into Britain, I would be very surprised if the Charles Clore pavilion at Regent's Park had not included them in its collection at some point.

Most species are not endangered and I can see no reason why there should not be any in captivity in Britain. None of the zoos within a thirty mile radius of Nuneaton (Twycross, Dudley, Drayton Manor or the West Midlands Safari Park) have bandicoots, but it is not impossible that it was an exotic pet that had escaped or been 'liberated'.

EDITOR'S NOTE: We contacted Clinton Keeling who confirmed that although there are no species of Bandicoot currently in British Zoos, at least three species were kept by Regent's Park at various times. These are:

The Greater Rabbit Eared Bandicoot (*Macrotis lagotis*). The first specimen was purchased on April 28 1839 and it lived until 20 Dec 1840. The Short Nosed Bandicoot (*Isodon obesulus*) which was first exhibited on the 15th April 1880 Long Nosed Bandicoot (*Perameles nasuta*). The first specimen in the collection was presented on the 9th June 1908 by the Government of New South Wales.

It is almost certain that specimens of all three species were exhibited subsequently, both at Regent's park and probably at other UK Collections.

At the end of the day there's not much of a case here. One woman saw something she THINKS was a bandicoot. So far, no other witnesses have come forward. As I write this several months later it seems unlikely that this strange little vignette of fortune will be resolved. However, Badgers, muntjac, tawny owls and stoats hide in this, Nuneaton's largest tract of woodland, so if Bandicoots COULD hide anywhere in the area it would be in Hartshill Hayes.

No Pangolin however!!

EDITOR'S NOTE: As noted in A&M12 the general feeling in the CFZ Offices is that the whole thing was a hoax. According to Clinton Keeling, someone set up a spurious

'Bandicoot Hotline' (this was confirmed in the May 1997 issue of *Fortean Times*) which when anyone telephoned the number given they got hold of a furious member of the public tired of being plagued by nuisance telephone calls. It seems possible that the culprits were none other than the Japanese Owned multinational Electronics company Sony. Late last year they released a 'platform video game' for their machine 'The Sony Playstation'. The game was called 'Crash Bandicoot', and it seems not unlikely that someone involved in their publicity department dreamed up an amusing publicity stunt. Conversely it might be that the lady in Nuneaton actually saw some other species of animal, but that because the word 'Bandicoot' had been banded (no pun intended) so widely across the media at the time as a result of the (perfectly legitimate) activities of the SONY PSX Publicity Department that she jumped to a perfectly understandable conclusion.

THE PUZZLING PANGOLINS

by Clinton Keeling.

Always of interest to the naturalist is the situation known as discontinuous distribution, or as the trendies prefer to call it 'relict distribution'.

The most famous, indeed classic instance is that of the Azure Winged Magpie, a member of the crow family, that's found in southern China, and Spain, near the border with Portugal - and without a single other one in between.

There are many other - although perhaps less extreme examples - such as the Pika (looking something like a short eared rabbit, which is found in the American Rockies, the Caucasus and the Himalayas - again with no points in between), the Monk Seal (from the Mediterranean, the Caribbean and far out in the Pacific round Hawaii), the White

Rhinoceros (down in Zululand and up by the White Nile), and the Waldrapp or Bald Ibis which is found only on two cliffs. One in Turkey and one in Morocco.

However, if you really want to see discontinuous distribution at its best, although why the state of affairs has contrived to evolve is a complete mystery, you'll have to travel to the dense forests of West Africa - then on to the even thicker ones of South-East Asia. In both areas you'll find (if you are observant, patient and very fortunate), the strange and highly specialised fishing owls, the chevrotains or mouse deer, (which are in fact placed scientifically on their own but are vaguely related to the camels), and the astonishing pangolins, which are amongst the most remarkable of all mammals. Let's take a closer look at them.

There appear to be seven species of these strange creatures which, being completely covered by protective, horny scales, look decidedly un-mammal-like, indeed un-animal-like as the general effect is of a grotesque moving fir cone.

I shall always remember handling an example of the giant pangolin at the Antwerp Zoological Garden and being momentarily astonished at how delightfully warm it was to the touch; for a second or so I had not equated it with a mammal.

At one time the Pangolins were classified as Edentates - the so-called toothless mammals, but now they are placed in a small order of their own - the *Pholidota*.

Strictly nocturnal, they sleep in holes that they dig for themselves by means of their long, curved and extremely powerful claws, or they may make use of the holes of other species; one authority stated that he'd often found them curled up with quite large pythons - which doesn't really surprise me as neither mammal preys on the other. Their diet consists largely of invertebrates such as ants and termites, which they obtain by tearing down their concrete like nests by means of their claws, then scooping them up with their sticky tongues. It's

safe to say that the Pangolin's tongue is the most extraordinary part of an extraordinary creature, as it extends from the mouth to near the pelvic girdle, down towards the tail. In other words it's about half the owner's total length!

Obviously, the prey is swallowed alive, so things such as ants could be very uncomfortable things to have in one's stomach, but not if you're a pangolin, whose stomach is lined with horny knobs which grind up its indignant prey before it can make its displeasure known.

They have long snouts, with damp noses, so here is proof positive that they have a keen sense of smell, but as their eyes are so close to the ground, their vision must be poor to say the least! Surprisingly, the asiatic species have external ears, whereas those from Africa do not. All have prehensile tails, and some species are adept tree-climbers. The giant species from Africa, is said to be a good swimmer that readily takes to water if it feels threatened.

Pangolins are but rarely seen in zoological gardens, partly because of the difficulties attendant on obtaining them, but mainly on account of their highly-specialised diet, which we have yet to 'crack' in confinement.

Some degree of success has been obtained by feeding minced meat to which folic acid has been added to emulate the ants that would normally be consumed. However, the giant species has successfully bred in the aforementioned Antwerp Zoological Garden.

The London Zoological Garden's first specimen, a Small-scaled Tree pangolin, was purchased on May 24th 1877, but was obviously in a moribund state as it only lived three days!

A Temminck's Pangolin was deposited on June 29th 1896, and Chinese Pangolin was presented on July 3rd 1925. I recall two Giants in the old Rodent House c.1960, but don't know when they arrived or how long they lived.

PANGOLINS

by Tom Anderson

(Its a bird, its a plane... no it's Aberdeen's Mr Entertainment)

Worldwide there are seven species of Pangolin. Three Asiatic; The Chinese (*Manis pentadactyla*), Indian (*M. crassicaudata*) and the Malayan (*M. javanica*). The four African species have a different nomenclature and include the giant pangolin, and the tree pangolin (*M. tricuspis*).

All are ant/termite eaters whose only defence is 'ball curling' protected by overlapping scales. These are a form of hair produced by a layer of epidermis known as the Malphagian which grows from fleshy protuberances called papillae. In addition to rolling, the tree pangolin by definition is arboreal, and is also less common near people making it the least threatened of the African species.

All pangolins are preyed by man and animals, their scales are used as charms and the flesh highly prized. The tree species ability to emit noxious anal secretions similar to those of the mustelidae would appear to have some effect as a deterrent.

Prior to colonisation, the giant species was totemic to the Boganda people, but is now the most vulnerable of all the seven and is classed in the Red Data Book as endangered. Pangolins are also vulnerable to bush fires and, in cattle country, electric fencing.

Possibly due to less intensive farming methods, the Asian species are under less territorial pressure and are reputedly 'holding their own'.

Reports of species interaction are normally of the frustrated canine variety, where a jackal is thwarted by a rolled-up pangolin, but there is a record of a female tiger whose cub has been taken by hunters, engaging in manic displacement

activity by literally shredding an empty pangolin carapace!

THE PANGOLIN IN HONG KONG

by Jonathan Downes.

Regular readers cannot fail to have noted that I have a particular fascination with the zoology of Hong Kong, that tiny fragment of south western China which has been a British 'possession' since 1841, and which, on the first of July this year reverts to Chinese rule amidst scare stories of Communist oppression. As both a zoologist and a lover of the colony and its wildlife, one of the most worrying aspects of the handover is the undoubted affect that will take place upon its fragile ecosystem.

Hong Kong is an area somewhat similar in size to the Isle of Wight and is inhabited by about the same number of people as live in Scotland. It is also home to a rich and varied wildlife which in recent times has included tigers, leopards and which even today includes wild cats, two species of civets and other interesting creatures including the chinese pangolin.

Writing in 1951, Herklots noted ('*The Hong Kong Countryside*'. SCMP pubs. p.90) that:

"This harmless and very useful animal is persecuted by the Chinese who believe that the scales have remarkable medicinal properties; the animal is also eaten.."

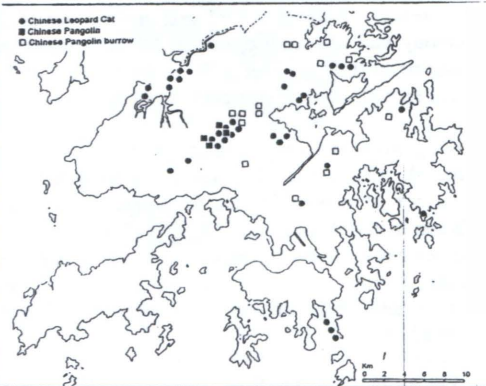
and also noted that its Chinese name ch'uen shaan kaap which literally translated means 'digging mountain scales', and also notes that kaap also means 'finger nails'.

Even in 1951 the animal was rare in the colony, but Marshall (1967) in '*Mammals of Hong Kong*' (HK Govt Pubs), recorded it both from the island of Hong Kong and the New Territories. When

Dennis Hill and Karen Phillips wrote 'Hong Kong Animals in Colour' ((HK Govt Pubs 1981). they noted that:

"It is found in small numbers on Hong Kong Island and in scattered localities in the New Territories"...

... but over the last sixteen years its numbers seem to have declined dramatically. In issue 15 of the excellent 'Porcupine!' (the Journal of the University of Hong Kong Ecology and Biodiversity Survey) published late in 1996 only four recent sightings were noted although the distinctive burrows had been found in several other localities on the mainland.



It seems that this primitive and distinctive mammal is almost acting as a 'symbol' for the decline of the native wildlife of the territory. Let us hope that as the ci-devant Crown Colony of Hong Kong enters a new era of political growth that this charming and fascinating animal will not prove to be another victim of 'progress'.

In Pursuit of Pangolins

(This is a short excerpt from Dr Shuker's forthcoming book 'From Flying Toads to Snakes with Wings' and is included with the kind permission of the author.)

Equally as incongruous ... is a scaly anteater (pangolin) abounding in England, but how else can we explain the baroque beast encountered in Dumpton Park, Ramsgate, Kent, on April 16th 1954 by Police Constable S Bishop, and described by him as a 'walking fir cone'? This is an excellent description of a pangolin, those insectivorous mammals covered in huge scales remarkably similar to a fir cone or pine cone. Pangolins, however, are wholly restricted to the tropics of Africa and Asia. Also, they are so difficult to maintain in captivity that they are seldom exhibited in zoos, and hardly ever kept as pets. So even if we do identify P.C.Bishop's beast as a pangolin, how can we explain its presence in a Kent park? We have simply exchanged one mystery for another and emerged none the wiser.

Not only are pangolins non-British, they are also non-aquatic. On January 8th 1973, the Hindu, a Madras newspaper, reported that a scaly, orange-coloured beast measuring almost three feet long, with a sharp, anteater-like nose, and able to walk and to run on land, had been caught by fishermen in the sea off Tranquebar, Madras. True, it has certain pangolin similarities, but pangolins are neither orange coloured nor amphibious. Needless to say, no further news has appeared.



THE BARKING BEAST OF BATH

by Terry Hooper

At the time off this case I was the director of UFO International as well as running a UK Branch of the late Ivan T. Sanderson's Society for the Investigation of the Unexplained (SITU). It was in my capacity as a SITU member that I looked into the affair, although I had been alerted to it by the British UFO Research Association (BUFORA) - and the Press desperately tried to get a UFO group involved.

The BUFORA National Investigations Co-ordinator, Maureen Hall, sent me three newspaper clippings. I was told that BUFORA wanted me to look into the case and would pass me further information later. I was mystified, but with a national UFO Group seemingly possessing more information, and with the Press trying to get me involved, I assumed that there was more here than met the eye.

The Bristol Evening Post of the 12th August 1980 reported:

"Beware of the Beast! Anyone stalking the mystery beast of Brassknocker Hill, Bath, could be in for a nasty shock, RSPCA Inspector Peter Meyer warned today. Renewed hunts are being made for the creature after a policeman and a taxi driver saw a monkey about three feet tall near the woods behind the hill at the weekend. The beast first appeared last summer, damaging trees and frightening wildlife. Efforts to track it down failed. Today Mr Meyer said: 'If it is a chimp or a monkey and it has been living in the wild for so long it could be extremely dangerous...'"

The item stated that Mr Meyer's search on the 11th had been unsuccessful but that he planned another search that day. Mr Ron Harper, a retired cabinet maker, who lived on the edge of the woods was convinced that this beast was a monkey. He told reporters:

"It has been here in the wood all the time but it comes out in August when it gets warmer and the new shoots appear on the trees. We think that it was let loose from a car, probably by a foreigner who didn't want to report the loss".

I could find nothing that indicated a UFO angle. The *Daily Mirror* of the same date had a field day. It reported that a 'strange furry creature' was first seen in the august of 1979. The article informed us that:

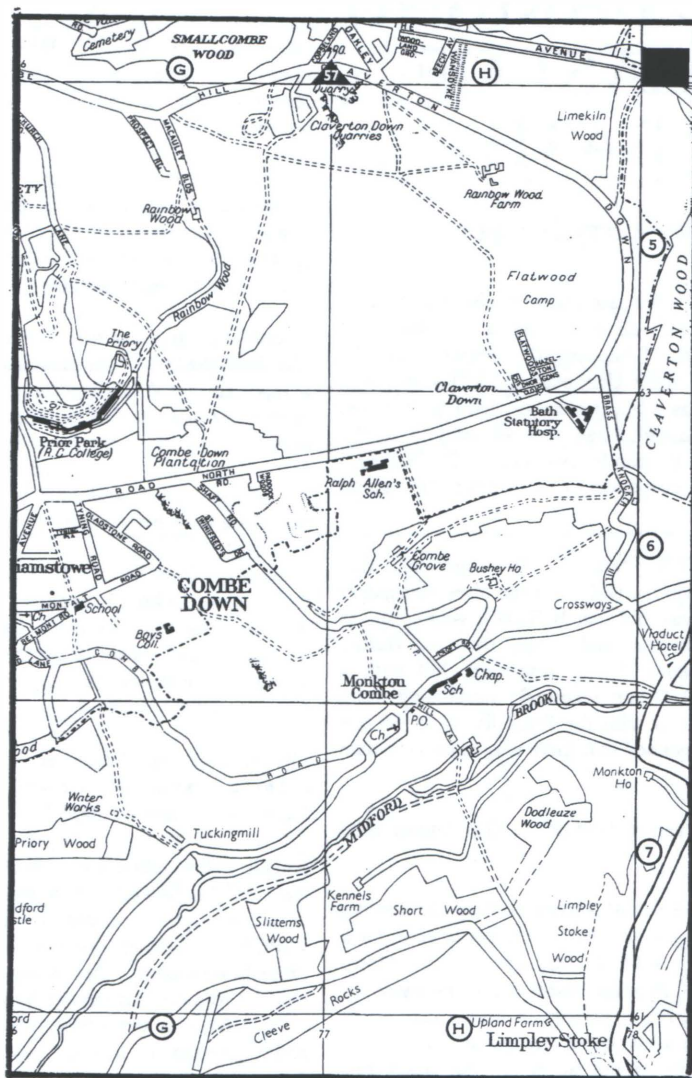
".... shaggy shapes and glaring eyes made some of the locals think twice about venturing out at night".

Certainly neither Mr or Mrs Harper were afraid of the creature. John Elphinstone, a taxi driver, was driving along when the beast 'hailed him' from the roadside. A policeman dispatched to the scene was in time to see the creature lope off. Inspector Mike Price, of Bath police said:

"We were sure that this mystery creature would turn out to be a monkey of some sort. After all, men from Mars aren't hairy are they?"

I made a few preliminary checks. The RSPCA in Bath and Mr Meyer's office would not return calls or answer letters of enquiry. I tried the Bristol RSPCA who told me that I ought to try the Primate Protection League.... they never answered either! A reporter told me that strange lights had been seen. I visited the area but never found Mr Meyer. The police referred me to the *Daily Mirror* article and that was it. I telephoned BUFORA and explained that I thought that it was just an escaped chimpanzee. I was told that I should stick at it and I'd be passed on 'certain information' BUFORA had. I tried to get even the vaguest idea of what this 'information' was, but was unlucky.

Map of area involved in the Barking Beast of Bath case,



The map clearly shows how sparsely populated the area involved is and the extent of woodland; square H6 marks the Brassknocker Hill area.

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I suppose that the article which appeared in The Guardian newspaper on 23rd August 1979 had much to do with this mystery. Though, when I contacted the reporter involved, Dennis Barker, he couldn't recall much other than there was 'something' to do with UFOs and all his notes were gone anyway. It was, oddly enough, Mr Barker who tried to rope in UFO International in 1979 - a year before BUFORA had contacted me.

Barker's article reported that the four foot (1.2m) tall beast had shattered the peace of the little village; it gave the impression of wearing white spectacles. Pigeons, magpies and jackdaws had vanished from the area and bark had been stripped off the trees as far up as twenty feet. (6m). The theory was put forward that the creature must be able to hang upside-down and lean over to do the damage. The beast always did its work at night it seems.

In his article Mr Harper reported that it was some kind of rodent. He wrote that a man from the Bath Park's Committee had paid a visit and stated:

"You know, Mr Harper, if I was not talking silly, I would say that you have a squirrel ten times bigger than normal".

Harper also wrote that the teeth marks found were:

"Ten to twenty times the size of a squirrel 's".

The Harper's pet goat would not go near to the tree that the 'beast' had attacked. At least fifty other trees in the area had been similarly damaged.

At this time no-one had actually seen the beast, until allegedly at least, Mr. Christopher Morris and a friend were driving through Monkton Combe at around 12.30 a.m. There, in the middle of the road, stood the creature illuminated by the vehicle's headlights. It was 3-4 feet (90cms to 1.2m) tall, and had bright white rings around the eyes as though it were wearing spectacles. Mr Morris thought that it looked like a baboon, although his friend claimed that it more nearly resembled a

chimpanzee.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For more details on this sighting and other background information on this case please consult *Fortean Times* #30 p.10.

I decided to look around the area and for a week I lived in a tree, getting dirtier and smellier by the day. I saw no RSPCA Inspector. No member of the Primate Protection League. Not even one of the reporters who seemed to prefer to telephone around for clues but do no actual searching in the field. I did try to ignore a rather amorously involved couple one night. Nothing else though - well, nothing actually SEEN that is.

There was a strong smell of fresh monkey urine. Having spent many hours watching the great apes and other primates at Bristol Zoo I am very familiar with the odour which is unmistakeable. During the mid 1970s I was visiting Westbury Wildlife Park and achieved the dubious honour of being urinated on by a chimpanzee which left an unforgettable smell! I could find no faeces but the smell convinced me.

I contacted BUFORA and was told that they hadn't thought that there was anything to this case. The strange light had turned out to be a meteorite. I told BUFORA where to go; I'd wasted time and money for nothing. The case was closed, or so I thought.

In 1996 I received word that between one and three chimpanzees might be loose in the area.

There was nothing new after my appeal to the press, but I did get a letter from John Elphinstone who is now living on the island of Benbecula in the North Atlantic. Yes, he HAD seen a chimp and a policeman had seen it also. Mrs Harper, the widow of Ron, wrote to say that he had seen the 'chimp' on several occasions. Primates on the loose seem to be becoming common; a Baboon was sighted in Shropshire in 1996.

But does something else live in the woods now? I

received a letter in November 1996 from Martha Wakelin. In August 1995 she was staying with a friend whose house is in the valley just below Brassknocker Hill.

They were preparing some jumps for pony riding when Martha turned and saw a black cat sitting on the top of the hill next to a log. They later measured the log and found it to be 2m long and 30cm high and wide. The cat seemed large in comparison.

Martha alerted her friend who was rather bemused. Both decided to approach the cat and see whether it was tame (something that I would NOT recommend that anyone do). As they got to within a hundred metres of the cat it turned and ran off into the woods. Its size was estimated as three times that of a domestic cat, probably 60cms high, 30-45 cm wide and 60 cm from the front paws to the tail.

The next day, Martha's friend's father was getting out of his car when he called out: "Look at that cat!" All three saw it in the same spot as in the previous day. The incident was not reported.

So, are there large cats also living in the woods at Brassknocker Hill? It is interesting to speculate upon the situation. No doubt, some 'foreigner' was driving past when his pet baboon/chimp and cat escaped and he just never reported it.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Methinks Senor Hooper is being facetious!

Whatever the explanation, Britain's fauna is getting some strange new additions.

EDITOR'S NOTE: There are some interesting parallels between this case and other reports from the Westcountry. As I have noted elsewhere there are a growing number of reports of what are described as 'monkeys', 'apes' and even 'bigfoot' from the United Kingdom.

The Devon folklorist Theo Brown collected a number of such stories including one chilling recollection by a friend of hers who had been walking alone at dusk near the neolithic earthworks at the top of Lustleigh Cleave on the extreme eastern side of Dartmoor.

Lustleigh Cleave is an extraordinarily strange place, and it appears to be one of those 'window areas' where an inordinate number of unexplained incidents and anomalous phenomena seem to take place on an almost monotonous basis. I have got reports of sightings of a ghostly Tudor hunting party, mysterious lights in the sky, and even the apparitions of a pair of Roman Centurions, but Theo Brown's friend saw, clearly, a family of 'cave men', either naked and covered in hair or wrapped in the shaggy pelts of some wild animal, shambling around the stone circle at the top of the cleave just a few yards away from the place where in 1978 two schoolboys found the skull of what is certainly a large predatory felid, a discovery which to this day remains a mystery.

Another report, also from the South West concerns a man who later in Africa had a reputation as a big game hunter who saw a creature at the Hangley Cleeve barrows in Somerset which he described long after the sighting as the most terrifying thing he had ever seen.

He described it as a '*crouching form like a rock with matted hair all over it and pale, flat eyes*'. I have other reports from that area of hulking man shaped shadows that are seen in a local quarry, and indeed the annals of fortiana are full of such events world wide.

Whereas I have presented a case for the zoological identity of some of the more well known BHM sightings across the world, I would not suggest for one moment that these people are part of a relict population of *Homo erectus* who are waiting on the genetic sidelines before

emerging into the real world to make their existence obvious, I would maintain that such apparitions fall firmly into the category of BHM sightings worldwide.

Other British, and specifically South Western British sightings of anomalous phenomena which although they are presently classed elsewhere amongst the pantheon of forteen phenomena, are the Ape and Monkey Ghosts such as *'The Man Monkey of Lincolnshire'*, and more appositely the ghost ape of Marwood in Devon and *'Martyn's Ape'* of Athelhampton in Dorset, which although they are explicable within the terms of purely regional folklore as 'animal ghosts', exhibit in my opinion, characteristics analogous to those exhibited by the smaller BHM phenomena of parts of the United States.

Unlike the phenomena in America, however these British phenomena each have a convenient little folk story to explain their presence in the occult infrastructure of the region. The Ghost Ape of Marwood was, when alive a pet of a local landowner who one day grabbed the landowner's young son and climbed a tree with him, refusing to come down, whereas the well known spectre of "Martyn's Ape" is supposed to have its origins in the unfortunate pet of an earlier female scion of the Martyn family who was either accidentally walled up alive during building work, or entombed (also alive) when the daughter either committed suicide in a locked, secret room or was walled up by an unforgiving parent, (depending on which account you read).

It is my supposition that rather than the apparitions being a result of these, rather far fetched stories, the stories were rather invented by local people to explain the sightings of monkey shaped apparitions, or small BHM as we should really refer to them, that had been seen in the vicinity since times immemorial.

I noted some other reports in my articles for *Fortean Times* (December 1995), *Encounters* (July 1996) and *Sightings* (May 1997). One specific incident which has disturbing parallels with the events recounted by Terry Hooper occurred in South Devon during the late summer and early autumn of 1996.

In south Devon, between the towns of Paignton and Brixham lie Churston Woods. These woods have long been of interest to me because of the sightings of mysterious small carnivores which appear to be a relict population of Beech Martens (a species thought extinct in Britain since the last Ice Age). Fifteen separate witnesses over a six week period in August/September 1996 reported seeing what they described as 'a green faced monkey' running through the woods. Although some of the descriptions were very vague most of them described a tailless animal between four and five feet tall with a flat, olive-green face. Although there are primates with 'green' faces, (for example the olive baboon and some of the west African vervet monkeys), none of these correspond in the slightest to the descriptions of a humanoid or chimp like creature which was seen both swinging through the trees and running through the woods.

I think that it is no coincidence that there were a number of UFO sightings in the area at the time and also several crop circles in the vicinity - one of which contained the mutilated corpses of several pigeons. (See Pete Glastonbury's article in *Goblin Universe* #5).

Although it is certain that bona fide primates do on occasion escape from private collections and zoos, and may well live for a while in the British countryside, I feel that the Barking Beast of Bath, like the other examples that I have presented above is a puzzling zooform phenomenon rather than an out of place animal *per se*.

HERE BE PANTHERS

by Richard Freeman

In bygone days, map makers drew monsters over unknown regions of the world and wrote 'here be dragons'. As I found out to my cost on a recent crypto-excursion, today's map makers are hardly more competent.

The whole sorry episode began with an article in the *Yorkshire Evening Post* on October the third 1996. Mr John Lisowiec and his family reported seeing 'an all black animal much larger than a dog but smaller than a calf' running at 45 degrees across a field towards their car which was caught in traffic at the time. He described a long curling tail and a big round head.

The exotically named family were returning to Leeds from Ilkley, and saw the cat close to Sherbourn. Shortly before an unnamed man had seen a panther close to Selby and another couple had spotted the beast on September 22nd in the same general area.

Another witness, Mr Stephen Johnson and friends picked up the beast's eye in his car headlights. Mr Johnson claimed that the animal showed no fear of his car and continued down the hedgerow. As it turned out, Mr Lisowiec resides in the same area as I do, and so I decided that an interview would be a good idea. Sadly, the Lisowiecs (say that ten times when you've had a few), were ex-directory. Even so I had a crypto-mystery, figuratively, at least, on my doorstep, and it seemed that the next logical step should be an investigation in the field.

Asking for the most detailed map of the relevant area (most sightings were around Selby, just south of York). I made a photocopy of the map. Circling all the sightings I triangulated an area just North-

East of Selby. According to the map there was a large wood almost as big as the town slap bang in the area.

I invited two of Leeds' finest fortune tellers along with me. Mr Philip Thoruley, an occultist and fellow goth, and Mr Jake Kirkwood, proprietor of Ubik, the finest second-hand book store in Leeds and a veritable mine of rare and wonderful fortune teller books.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Hey Richard - Graham and I are the only ones allowed to do gratuitous 'product placement' in this mag..

I procured a hessian sack and an excessively large leg of lamb as bait. Armed with cameras we were ready. I had my packed lunch and sensible shoes. The expedition could begin.

It was at this point that things all went 'pear shaped'.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I have never actually understood that expression...

The supposedly detailed map had failed to show a labyrinth of tiny back roads in which Jake (who was travelling separately) got completely lost and was not seen again until the following day!

Philip and I drove around fruitlessly for about an hour. During this time it dawned on me that this was by no means ideal panther country! The whole area was arable farmland with no tasty livestock and absolutely no cover. Eventually we asked a local, and showed him the point on the map where we were trying to get to. The woods, or so it turned out, were several miles away from the place they were supposed to be according to the map.

At last we found the woods. (Bishopswood as it was properly known). Looking around we found the prints of several large dogs and a muntjac deer. I placed the leg of lamb into the hessian sack after making several large gashes into the meat.

We dragged the sack through the woods from several areas back to our observation point. Then we tied the sack out of reach of fox or badger and hid in an old trailer to watch. In a scenario with which most cryptozoologists must be familiar absolutely NOTHING happened! Not a sausage!

To be honest, I had doubts about the whole area. If there were 'panthers' here I think that they were just moving through, perhaps straying in from the more wooded Yorkshire coast.

The thing that was really staggering was the innaccuracy of the maps. I find myself wondering whether, if I have this much trouble with maps in tame old Yorkshire, what will the wilds of Tasmania be like when I go there later this year in search of the elusive thylacine?

ANOTHER YORKSHIRE ABC

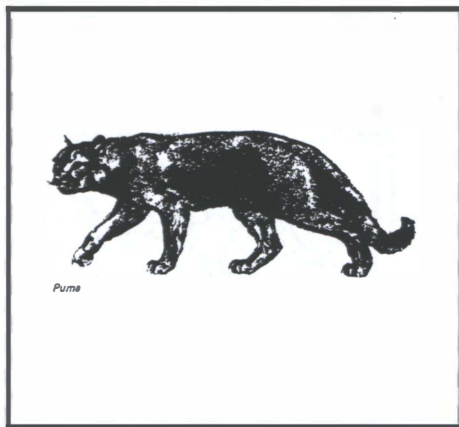
by Henry Moncrieff.

EDITOR's NOTE: Bearing in mind the contents of Richard's penultimate paragraph, it is ironic that very soon afterwards I received the following account of an ABC sighting taken in extracts from a letter from Yorkshire based artist Henry Moncrieff. He telephoned me one morning in late winter to tell me that only twenty minutes before he had seen what appeared to be a puma walk leisurely across an area of scrubland at the bottom of his garden. I asked for some background details on the area, and a week or so later he wrote to me..

Near my house is the main cliff edge. Below is the undercliff covered in thick brush, ten foot or so high. This extends for about half a mile from my house and is about 100 yards wide until it meets the sea. Foxes and badgers live in the gorse and the hawthorn scrub.

My girlfriend and I inspected the area but we didn't find any fur or prints. It had been a very hard frost that night and naturally the ground was frozen solid. However, the previous week, my girlfriend saw large unidentified paw prints in the snow whilst out walking. Two nights before the sighting we were in bed reading at about 1.30 a.m. We heard something large move over a loose drain cover just outside our window. We are used to foxes and badgers in the garden. We leave out meat scoops for them. Whatever it was that moved over the loose drain cover was heavier than either.

On speaking to local woodsmen and poachers in the area, it seems that at least five well attested sightings of this animal have been made. (See sketch map below). To illustrate these sightings all the people that I have spoken to have described the same animal that I saw. The sightings listed are between November and January. If more information comes my way I will pass it on to you...



Picture Courtesy H. Moncrieff.

DANISH LEATHERBACK TURTLES

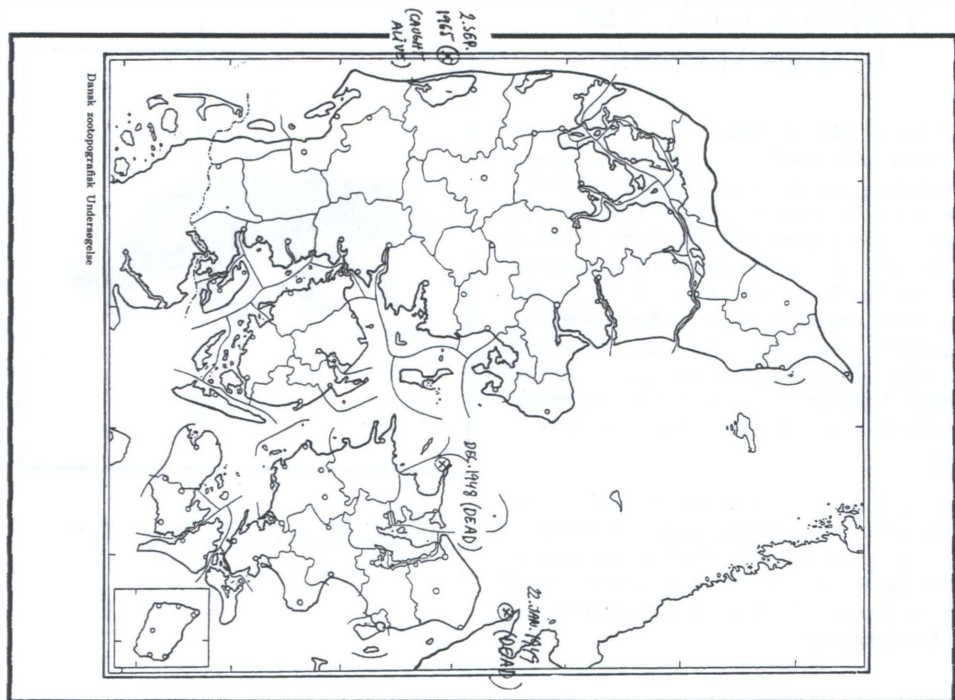
by Lars Thomas

EDITOR'S NOTE: When we met at the 1996 Unconvention, Lars and I had a long discussion about stranded cetaceans in northern waters. In passing I mentioned my interest in European records of marine chelonia and much to my surprise he informed me that there were several records of the Leather Turtle or Luth from Danish waters. I asked for more information, and true to his word, a few days later, I received the following letter and map...

"In December 1948, a dead leatherback turtle was found on the beach at Yderby Vesterstrand, It disappeared at the next high tide, drifted roughly 100m and was washed up on the shore south of Skalderviken in Sweden on the 22 January 1948. This was the first Danish record.

The second, and to date the most recent, is from the 2nd September 1965 when a fisherman caught a live specimen almost five kilometres west of Nynindegab in western Denmark. We do have a third Danish record, but this specimen, although caught by a Danish fisherman was in British territorial waters".

EDITOR'S NOTE: We would be interested to receive any other accounts of out of place chelonia from northern waters, and are presently compiling a major project on the subject.



DANISH LEATHERBACK TURTLES

For those of a vagabond disposition and an enquiring mind, coupled with a pair of sturdy thighs, a barrel chest, a rugged jaw, a grip like steel, a glint in the eye, and a suspicious bulge in the Levi's; there's only one place to be, it's...

NORTH OF THE BORDER



with Tom Anderson

(Ja! Ja! I have never done it like zis before...)

Shine on Algae Bloom..

As I write the first harbingers of spring are with us. Birdsong at eventide, a carpet of crocus underfoot and yet another twist in Nessie's tail.

Following the claims of a charter boat skipper to have discovered a huge cavern at 240 metres, an Aberdeen sub-sea firm intends to survey the area using robotic cameras at an alleged cost of £10,000.

A laudable endeavour and somewhat fortuitous

given the current exchange rate against the dollar and the adverse affect that this has had on this year's level of accomodation in the Inverness area. As your northern correspondent narrowly missed being a roadkill statistic last summer due to a German tour bus driver's attitude (*for you Tommy ze Summer is over*) I can hardly wait for this year's influx of Camcorder Man (similar to Cro-Magnon but less social skills).....

Every Christmas I am sent a very glossy, up-market fishing magazine from a 'Gentleman's Outfitters' in Pall Mall. The mechanics of impaling a fish on a hook receives considerably less attention than what to wear whilst doing it.

Almost as much print is dedicated to the fisherman's 'oneness with nature' and sundry articles extolling the writer's powers of observation.

I have yet to read one of these pieces where the author has failed to recognise some leaf, toadstool, dropping etc.

How disappointing, then for me to have to report my countrymen's shortcomings at a trout fishery near Stirling. For some time the anglers had been observing two crows, one quite large, swooping down to catch dead fish. These should not be available in a well run fishery, but I digress.

The RSPB finally identified it as a turkey vulture, wingspan getting on for two metres, ringed on left leg and doubtless an escapee.

Lack of thermals over the Atlantic precluding broad winged raptorsmaking it over. If nothing else this reinforces my scepticism regarding eyewitness accounts involving distance, ratios and volume, especially over water.

It also does nothing to dispel any doubts remaining over the veracity of fishermen's tales.

Pearl's a Singer

(as recorded by Whelkie Brooks?)

by Dr Karl P.N.Shuker.

EDITORIAL NOTE: The entire editorial team would like to disassociate themselves from the above pun which was the sole responsibility of Dr Shuker.



After our esteemed editor's recent tour de force in *Fortean Studies Volume Three*, dealing with those musical murids of mellifluous melody (or singing mice, to thee and me), I felt compelled to share with you the wondrous saga of Molly, the singing oyster.

T'was a dark and stormy night - possibly - in 1840 when Mr Pearkes was first captivated by Molly's bewitching siren song, resonating from the dank depths of a cask of shellfish newly-delivered to his store in Vinegar Yard, Drury Lane. In reality, it sounded more like a high-pitched whistle, but if you should ever find yourself being serenaded by an oyster, you will no doubt appreciate why Pearkes did not worry unduly about such phonic technicalities. Here was a star in the making, a veritable diva from the sea depths!

And so it was that Molly was proudly displayed by

Pearkes in Vinegar Yard for all to see, and hear. During the next few weeks, regally ensconced within a tub of oatmeal and brine, this shrill soprano of the shellfish world delighted an ever-present audience with her reedy repertoire - enchanting the acting company from the nearby Theatre Royal, and featuring in several contemporary newspaper stories. Indeed, as befitting this molluscan megastar, she even inspired a song, penned by a popular music-hall artiste named Sam Cowell; and her lamellibranchian likeness was faithfully committed to paper and ink within the pages of Punch who referred to her as 'a phenomenal bivalve'.

Not surprisingly, Pearkes received several sizeable offers of money from circus owners and theatre managers to purchase Molly, but he declined to relinquish his protégé, thereby ensuring that this nacreous nightingale sang on in Vinegar Yard.

Tragically, however, in the unfathomable workings of the Universe, dragons and shellfish-sellers may well live forever (or seem to), but not so little boys or singing oysters. And so it was that came the sad day when Molly whistled no more, having departed this mortal maelstrom for a bright, celestial sea transcending her humble oatmeal abode.

But why - and how - did she acquire her unique vocal talent? Popular opinion was sharply divided, between the satirical and the scientific. On one hand, in the words of Douglas Jerrold, perhaps our fair Molly '*...had been crossed in love and whistled only to keep up appearances*'. On the other hand, her musical attributes probably owed their origin to a simple fluke in the shell's architecture - water passing across her gills creating a whistling sound through a small hole that had somehow formed in her shell.

Whatever the answer, however, Molly's place in the annals of contemporary music must surely be assured. As to her favourite arias: whether or not they included such treasures as "Shell be coming round the mountain when she comes" or "Thank heaven for little pearls" is not recorded. (And neither, as far as I am aware, are they. Such is life.)

A World Beating Musical *Mus* *musculus* - The International Singing Mouse Contest of 1937.

By Nick Smith

EDITOR'S NOTE: I have been interested in the phenomenon of singing mice for ages, and am the author of what I hope is the definitive work on the subject (no-one else would be silly enough to write about them) which was published in Steve Moore's excellent *Fortean Studies Volume Three* late last year. During my research I discovered that there was a BBC archive recording of these wee cowering but not very timorous beasties still in existence. I was unable to visit the sound archives in person so I sent along our intrepid Home Counties representative to investigate...

In the National Sound Archives of the British Museum is a two minute long recording (reference MP9810) of an extract from the BBC's and the CBC (Columbia)'s 1937 joint broadcast of the

results of their search for the greatest international (seemingly only North American and British) singing mouse. It is a bizarre, amusing, but ultimately insubstantial and uninformative fragment, demonstrating only that singing mice must be very elusive creatures.

The English announcer kept the regulation BBC plum in his mouth throughout, but his jocular, giggly tone, wasn't what I expected of 1930's radio. He gave no details of the contest, nor of the age, sex or type (I assume that they were all the house mouse *M.musculus*), of the performers, their keepers and home lives, or indeed, how their special talents had been nurtured. We were merely told the competitor's names and the places that they represented.

First, was a lackadaisical duet by the British contingent, Mickey of London and Chrissie of Wales. They made no more than usual unmelodious mouse noises: a hubbub of chirping, chattering and cheeping, along with scratchings and rustlings as they skittered around.

This unimpressive effort was obviously not going to take a lot of beating and, sure enough, the announcer, now in a cacchinary fit, then introduced the winner of the contest, Mikey of New York, accompanied by Johnny of Toronto and Minnie of Minnesota. Their recording ended with their performance, two of them making the familiar mousey squeaks and scrabbings, while another, presumably Mikey manically piped a reedy tremelo, his tempo and volume at least ten times faster and louder than his colleagues.

But, despite the strident Mikey's zeal, the BBC and the CBC were over generous in describing any of this cat- (mouse?) erwauling as 'singing'. Even Mikey was not musical, melodious or harmonious as these terms are commonly understood compared, either with other animals such as birds or cetaceans, or more anthropomorphically.

He didn't follow a human singer or instrumentalist, unlike Murri the German tom-cat made famous

through radio broadcasts of his word-perfect renditions of nursery rhymes or even speak a human language (albeit 'parrot-fashion') in a sing song voice like Pepe the Chihuahua. (Both cases cited by Michell and Rickard, 1982).

However, even more worrying than this apparent laxness of the judging criteria of such a prestigious international context, was the extreme speed and fervour of the champion's performance. Was this rodent raving mad, or just raving? Had Mikey been taking performance enhancing amphetamines? Should there have been random drug testing of the competitors?

I've never heard anything like this outrageously frantic exhibition before, and, judging by his reaction, neither had the announcer.

Whatever it was, it certainly wasn't singing, and after listening to him, the idea of a rodent proto-Lou Reed producing a tuneless speed-freak racket in New York during 1937 sounds as plausible as anything else that I can come up with.

Thanks to Tony at the National Sound Archives.

Reference.

Michell and Rickard (1982). *Living Wonders* (Thames and Hudson, London).

EDITOR'S NOTE: The full background to this remarkable competition can be found in my paper for *Fortean Studies*. In it I discuss the folklore and the factual accounts of singing mice and come to the conclusion that whereas most of these creatures are in fact suffering from a debilitating upper respiratory tract infection, there may in fact be a genuine fortean element to some of these reports. It has always saddened me that I never heard the BBC recording for myself, and Nick Smith's ridiculous critique of it makes me more determined to head for the National Sound Archives at the earliest possibility.

The Zebro - Prehistoric Survivor or Feral Donkey?

by Angel Morant Fores

For centuries, scholars have tried to find out the origin of the word 'zebra'. the name given by Portugese sailors to the famous striped equid of Africa. It was not until the beginning of this century that E.Merea, a Portugese philologist, conclusively demonstrated that the word 'zebra' was also used by the Spaniards and the Portugese to designate a local wild ass inhabiting the Iberian peninsula.

The Zebro, together together with other wild animals such as bear, wolf, deer, etc is mentioned in several Spanish treatises on hunting, from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance. In one of these works it is described as a 'mare-like, grey-coloured animal, with a black strip running along its back, and a dark muzzle'. However, the taxonomic identity of the mysterious equid from which the african zebra borrowed its name has remained a matter of continued dispute.

Now, Spanish archaeologists Carlos Nores and Corina Liesau claim they have found a solution to this long-standing zoological riddle. In a recent paper published in *ARCHAEOFAUNA* they state that there are serious hints that the Iberian zebro might correspond to the *Equus hydruntinus* of the European Pleistocene. According to Nores and Liesau this prehistoric equid might have survived in southern Spain, and, perhaps in some remote parts of Portugal into the 16th Century.

There has been some controversy regarding the precise affinities of *Equus hydruntinus*. Whilst most authors think that it was an ass-Equus (*Asinus*) - a few others, on the basis of its dental remains, argue that its closest living relatives are the african zebras. Until recently *Equus hydruntinus* was believed to have died off 12,000 years ago, but

but some Neolithic and Bronze Age sites in Spain have yielded bones of a small equid that may contribute to change this long held view. Although the identification of such remains is difficult due to their fragmentary nature, two German palaeontologists who have examined them are confident that they belong to *Equus hydruntinus*.

Worth mentioning here is that the African domestic ass or 'donkey', an animal whose remains could easily be mistaken for *Equus hydruntinus* was not introduced to the Iberian peninsula until the 8th Century B.C.

Recently Nores and Liesau found a more complete sample of bones of a similar equid at a Bronze Age site in southern Spain. The remains have been forwarded to the Department of Zoology at the University of Madrid for evaluation.

SOURCES

Carlos Nores and Corina Leisau (1992) *La Zoología histórica como complemento de la arqueozoología El caso del Zebro*.
ARCHAEOFAUNA, 1: 61-71.

EDITOR'S NOTE: It never ceases to surprise me that so many new discoveries are being made in the field of horses (no pun intended). One would have imagined that there was absolutely nothing left to discover as regards the Euidae, who, after all probably deserve the appellation of 'man's best friend' at least as much as do the dogs.

In recent issues of *Animals & Men* we have read about new animal discovered in Tibet and other parts of central Asia, as well as the ongoing discoveries concerning the true nature of the Quagga. If, indeed, this supposedly prehistoric horse did survive in Europe well into historical times it gives good hope for those of us researching other putative prehistoric survivors in the region.

"Here's another clue for you all the 'walrus' was
....DARREN!"

ODOBENUS UPDATE...

EDITOR'S NOTE: In A&M #11 we printed a collection of articles about mysterious, fortan and out of place walruses. Here two of the contributors to that collection; Clinton Keeling and Darren Naish, tie up a few loose ends and return to the subject of these singular pinnipeds...

THE RETURN OF THE SPACE WALRUS

by Darren Naish.

One of the aspects of contemporary walrus research that I attempted to make clear in my article in A&M11 (pp. 16-18)^[1] was that the taxonomy of the only living walrus (*Odobenus rosmarus*), is a comparatively settled issue. How ironic, therefore, that a paper published in 1996 should present data that nicely muddies it all.

Writing in *The Journal of Zoology* (240:495-499), two scientists of Oslo's Norwegian Polar Institute, O. Wilig and I Gjertzt, explain how the immobilised and measured adult male walruses at Svalbard between 1989 and 1993. 41 animals were measured. Targeting especially large walruses Wilig and Gjertzt obtained a sample varying from 960 kg to 1475 kg in weight, and from 258 to 380 cm in length. A weight of 1883 kg was estimated for one individual, but possible errors in weight estimation led to the suggestion that Svalbard walruses may weigh up to 2000 kg.

A two ton walrus is hard to imagine. I am tempted to recall a scene in 'Sinbad and the Eye of the

Tiger'. Turning to the application of this data, walrus literature states that Pacific walruses (*O.r.divergens*) are characterised by greater size than that obtained by Atlantic walruses (*O.r.rosmarus*). Standard lengths of Pacific walruses have been given as 250-300 cm, and weights as 800-1700 kg.

Wilig and Gjertz's new data shows conclusively that Svalbard walruses, and possibly Atlantic walruses as a whole, can obtain (if not exceed) the body size of Pacific walruses, so a distinction based on these factors is invalid. The sizes of individuals measured in the past may have been recorded without due consideration of factors determined by age, so the differences in size between the walrus subspecies could well be an illusion.

Do other features remain to support the distinction of the subspecies?

Pacific and Atlantic walruses still differ slightly in colour and some aspects of skull morphology, but some experts now stress that walrus taxonomy really is in need of revision. Far be it from me to hint, but the view that eventually emerges may well turn out to be more complex than taxonomic tradition.

According to an 1881 text by T. Southwell, walruses are the inspiration for one of the most consistently recognisable sea monsters of old maps and bestiaries, Gesner's *Vacca marina*. With a pig-like face and upward-pointing tusks, this 'sea orc' acts as an evil devourer of maidens in certain tales. Lest we stoop so low as to suggest that it represents yet another cryptid spied by ancient mariners, it is clearly a mythified walrus.

There are, to my knowledge, no recorded instances of walruses attacking humans, but these remarkable beasts have been known to eat seabirds and seals.

Some old male walruses actually become specialist seal killers - supposedly, they can be told from

normal walruses by their heavier forequarters and blubber-stained tusks and skin. Indeed, there are reliable accounts from professional marine biologists of walruses grasping them with foreflippers and then dismembering them with their tusks. Both Ringed (*Phoca hispida*) and Bearded seal (*Erignathus barbatus*) remains have been found in walrus stomachs, as have, surprisingly, pieces of young walrus.

Normal walrus feeding is remarkable enough: they cruise along the seabed in search of large bivalves and, on finding one, violently suck the protrusive soft parts out of the shell.

Walruses do not dig with the tusks, as was long believed, but tusks are used in combat and in hauling out onto ice. Bivalve hunting is done by touch, using the sensitive bristles and upper lip, and the eyes are kept closed. Walrus suction feeding is made possible by unusual modification of the palate and throat musculature: this is clearly an efficient apparatus as captive walruses have, on occasion, demonstrated tremendous suction power.

Judith King (in *Seals of the World*, 1983) writes of one that managed to pull the 2.3 kg (6 lbs) metal plug from the bottom of its pool, and while the pool was full of water!

The mechanics of suction feeding are still poorly understood. A, however, it is essentially the only means a walrus has of getting food into the mouth, it must be the method employed during consumption of seal meat.

Narwhal (*Monodon monoceros*) remains have also been recorded from walrus stomachs. As with at least some of the seals, it is probable that the flesh was from scavenged carcasses, rather than individuals specifically killed by the walruses. There is one anecdotal account of a fight between an adult male Narwhal and a walrus, with the walrus winning and then eating the whale. It might be true, but then, it might not.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR



We welcome letters on any subject of interest to readers of this magazine, although we reserve the right to edit and/or omit where appropriate. Every effort has been made not to unwittingly libel anyone or to infringe upon their copyright. Any such actions are, however, the responsibility of the individual writer and not of the Editor, the editorial team, the Centre for Fortean Zoology or the publishers of this magazine. So there!

A CALL TO ARMS

Dear Readers,

No magazine can rely solely on the efforts of a selected few, who without wages strive to spread information. Therefore, it is very important and necessary, that we help by contributing what we can. If you do not feel able to write yourself, send a clipping or make a phonecall, or send a short notice. Then, someone else will eventually do the writing.

Animals & Men now has readers in over twenty countries, and the common denominator is interest and knowledge. This is why it is so important that YOU contribute, because in your own circles you are the best and the first to know. I do not expect the editor to go to my country, Denmark, for information, as I consider it my duty to forward it with pleasure. Therefore, dear brothers in arms, please use your valuable talents, write or send clippings. The fact that a few readers have been listed as 'local correspondents' is not meant as an exclusion to all others from that area. If you feel insecure about contacting England you can write to me at:

Taarnbyvej 104,
2770 Kastrup,
Denmark.

Telephone + 45 32 50 48 78

Personally, I will try and exchange addresses and telephone numbers with Danish cryptozoologists, to make us into a more efficient network. Let us hear your wild ideas! Believe me, it is a lot more fun to be active and communicate with people of the same interests. Therefore I hope that local representatives will, if possible, list their address and telephone numbers.

Best wishes,

Erik Sorenson,
Denmark.

MAN FROM ATLANTIS

EDITOR'S NOTE: Unfortunately it is very much the case that as investigators into the more arcane aspects of the zoological sciences we are potential targets for what can ungenerously be described as every loony on the block. I quite understand why some regional representatives are therefore unwilling to make their addresses public.

However, if any reader wishes to write to any regional correspondent, contributor or consultant of this magazine, they may do so c/o me at the Editorial Address and whilst I do not guarantee a reply, I guarantee that your letter will be passed on.

As Erik says, there are many innate problems being what is essentially a non-profit making organisation. Unfortunately, it seems that the 'powers that be' within the more mainstream branches of the zoological sciences are unwilling to give credibility to what they perceive as a bunch of dangerous anarchists, especially when it involves them parting with money.

The last time that I made such a comment it provoked a heated debate in the letters pages of this magazine, regarding our sometimes 'off the wall' approach to cryptozoological methodology.

I say now, as I said then, that I am attempting to edit a magazine which is read by people between the ages of 12 and 87, and by people who range from eminent molecular biologists to new age travellers.

It is part of the innate rationale behind this publication, and indeed behind our work on a holistic scale, that we need both ends of the spectrum in order to do what we do. Possibly this means that we shall never gain mainstream acceptance, but if this is the price we pay for being able to continue, then so be it...

Dear Editor,

I write with reference to the story in your latest Newsfile (A&M #11 p.9) about the family in the Philippines who claim that they have functional gill slits.

The story reminded me of another that I read recently about an eleven year old Australian boy who underwent surgery to remove 'fish-gill cartilage' from his neck ⁽¹⁾. Such claims of gill-like structures, supposedly vestigial evolutionary leftovers, seem to surface in the tabloid press from time to time. Indeed, many elementary textbooks perpetuate the notion that the human embryo passes through a series of evolutionary stages as it develops, one being a 'fish' stage in which the embryo has 'gill slits'.

In fact, the so-called 'gill-slits' are nothing of the sort. The human embryo DOES have pharyngeal pouches, but they have nothing to do with gills in form or function.

The pouches may superficially resemble gill slits, but they do not open into the throat (and are therefore not slits), and do not develop respiratory tissues or structures (and are therefore not gills).

In the human embryo, these pouches actually develop into various glands, the lower jaw, and structures in the inner ear. One authority states: "*Since the human embryo never has gills - branchia - the term pharyngeal arches and clefts has been adopted for this book*". ⁽²⁾

The claims of remnant fish-gills in adults and children are similarly baseless. Histological studies showed that in the Australian case mentioned above, the cartilage in the boy's neck was indistinguishable from normal human cartilage. The likely explanation is that some abnormality of embryonic development led to cartilage being

incorrectly 'seeded' in the neck (i.e it is normal tissue that ended up in the wrong place).⁽¹⁾

Yours sincerely,

Paul Garner,
Ely.

1. Wieland, C. (1994) 'A Fishy Story'. *Creation Ex Nihilo* 16(4):46-47

2. Langman, J. (1975). *Medical Embryology*. Third Edition. p.262.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I am certain that the Philippines case mentioned in A&M11 was of a similar provenance to the Australian case described by Paul Garner. However, the original newspaper report did mention that these people were able to 'breathe' underwater, and whilst it is almost certain that this is a piece of wishful thinking on the part of a gullible reporter, I would refer readers to the relevant chapter of Peter Costello's 'The Magic Zoo' where he describes historical accounts of people who did seem able to stay submerged for an extremely long period of time.

LION THROUGH OUR TEETH?

Dear Jonathan,

If the animal depicted on page 17 of A&M12 is a Barbary Lion, my name's George! Look at all that yellow in his decidedly scraggy mane, and I am sorry, but peer as I may I can see none of the characteristic extension of the mane running along the underside of the body - a dark line that's probably a shadow, yes, but no more than that! Still, as I've said for decades now, generally speaking people see what they want to see...

Contrary to popular belief, and semi-scientific dogma, the last wild Barbary Lion was shot in Algeria in 1943, and not 1922. It's full and

luxuriant mane - even in wild specimens it was well endowed here - was completely black, so any present day specimens with an admixture of yellow here must automatically be suspect as far as purity goes. As Chris Moiser correctly points out, a great many present-day zoological garden Lions have Barbary blood in their make-up.

Sometimes it's very dominant - for example, the Port Lympne animals look very convincing, and I well recall the magnificent Sultan, who lived at Manchester's Belle-Vue from 1942 until 1953 when he died at an estimated age of eighteen. He was regarded as the finest lion then in the country, and was certainly mainly, perhaps even wholly, Barbary. (Incidentally, an interesting point here, but for some reason nowadays, you never hear of a certain individual lion being described as a particularly fine specimen - part of the way in which wild animal husbandry and zoological gardens are going I suppose). In the surprisingly good, indeed underrated Tunis Zoological Garden in 1973 I was shown an animal specifically stated as being a Barbary, and learned that it had come from the Frankfurt Zoological Garden.

It's the first time that I have ever seen the Barbary Lion equated in any way with the Cape Lion, which became extinct as long ago as 1865, when the last specimen was shot in Natal - and which is too often confused with the *forma typica* Lion still to be found in South Africa.

The Cape Lion was a very definite sub-species immediately recognisable by being physiologically different from any other modern Lion, by means of its massive head that is perfectly rectangular in profile - as can immediately be seen in the excellent mounted specimen in the United Services Museum in London's Whitehall. Incidentally, there are only four other known mounted examples of this race - all in South Africa.

I found the article on the Mitten Crab of particular interest, as it reminded me of a tragic event, again

at Belle-Vue, when a Tigress named Stella, killed her keeper. This was on the 8th November 1925. Concerning this animal, I quote directly from my book 'The Life and Death of Belle Vue' (Clam Publications):

"She died after only four months in Manchester, and the autopsy revealed that she was riddled with tuberculosis which, the veterinary surgeon said, was probably caused by eating crayfish or crabs in the wild. This fascinated me for two reasons:

a. It's more than likely that the disease had affected her brain, or why else would she have been so savage to the extent of killing, without provocation, a devoted keeper?

and

b. There seems to be some kinship between TB and certain crustaceans, as between the wars, when the Mitten Crab (Eriocheir sinensis) from China contrived to establish itself in the Elbe Estuary, the German authorities rigorously forbade its use for food as it was a notorious TB carrier. Incidentally, I should like to have known the identity of the veterinary surgeon who made this observation. He was no doubt an ordinary practitioner in the Manchester area, yet I distinctly get the impression that he was far ahead of most of his contemporary colleagues when it came to knowledge of general zoology".

Interesting, I think you'll agree.

Pp. 36/7, and the 'strange' creature seen by the Lady at Borley Rectory - an excellent description of the larva of the very common Elephant Hawk Moth! Sorry to have poured cold water on a promising 'sighting'. The so called 'eyes' by the way, are dark spots just above the head to scare off predators - and people too ignorant to know what's in their gardens.

Ye Gods! I don't believe it! ... but it's there in black and white - someone talking sense about the Loch

Ness Monster...

Clinton Keeling,
Guildford.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Much to our surprise, nobody got the answer to our 'phone in competition in issue eleven. The answer was 'John Lennon and Yoko Ono', who in 1969 released an appalling record called 'Life with the Lions'.

I TELL YOU WHAT I WANT WHAT I REALLY REALLY WANT ETC...

Dear Mr Downes,

I recently read your magazine for the first time, and I was very impressed. I am fifteen years old and really want to be a cryptozoologist when I leave school. How do I do it?

Best wishes,

Danny Chope,
Blackpool.

EDITOR'S NOTE: At the risk of sounding facetious, and let me assure you all that I am being nothing of the kind, the only way to do anything, is to get out and do it. I have no professional qualifications even indirectly related to this subject, but I became a fortean zoologist, mainly because I told a reporter from the Observer that I was one. In the four years since we first published *Animals & Men* I have managed to appear on over thirty television programmes, in over a dozen magazines, and on two CD Roms. I have published two books and written over a million words on the subject. Mind you, I've got no money and my wife walked out on me, but I never started the Centre for Fortean Zoology to make money, more because it was what I had to do. I'm sorry if that doesn't really help...

BOOK REVIEWS



***Animals as Teachers and Healers - True stories of the transforming power of animals* by Susan Chernak McElroy (Rider Pb 252pp £8.99)**

I have usually stayed clear of 'new age' books - and this particularly horrific example is a true indication of why. What I object about is not actually what authors like this good lady have to say, but the way in which they say it. Much of this book presents 'true testimonies' from 'ordinary people' in a stomach churning twee manner which essentially puts off any reader with pretensions to good taste before he (or she) has started.

The real problem is that Ms McElroy (I feel sure that she is a Ms) has some valid and important points to make. For example, during a reasoned discussion on predation in the wild she writes:

"Unfortunately, some of us believe that wild animals are nothing more than competitors, vermin or garden pests. But wild animals are simply who

they are, for better or worse. It is our fantasies of them as terrible predators, the fearsome varmints, the 'evil' or 'bad' animals who live in our minds that tell us about who we are"...

However she counters this, perfectly reasonable argument, which indeed mirrors almost exactly what I, and various other writers have been saying within the hallowed pages of *'Animals & Men'* for years, with pages upon pages of dreadful poetry, and the revelation that she likes the music of John Denver!

Having finished the book (and skipped most of the poetry) I am left feeling none the wiser. It is undoubtedly true that animals have a great therapeutic value both for physical and emotional problems.

The companionship of my dog and two cats has brought me through some very bad times over the last year, and on the whole I am a supporter of the charity 'Pat-a-dog' who take tame animals to meet emotionally disturbed humans. However the style of this book is so annoying that for me at least it tended to outweigh what was often perfectly valid content.

***Psychic Animals* by Dennis Bardens (Capall Bann 203pp £10.95)**

This book covers much of the same ground as does the one reviewed above but does so in a sober, intelligent and far more worthy manner. I was particularly interested to read some of Mr Bardens's accounts of 'Beaky' the Cornish Dolphin who both attacked and 'saved' swimmers in Cornish waters some twenty years ago. I cover the story of this remarkable cetacean in some depth in my book *'The Owlman and Others'* and it is interesting to see how Mr Bardens and I have interpreted the available facts in a complimentary, though divergent manner.

Chapter eleven, which deals with apes and monkeys (and tips a nod to Aldous Huxley at the

same time) is particularly impressive.

Whereas I am still a confirmed fence sitter as regards the interstices of Extra Sensory Perception, I am quite prepared to believe that there are psychic links between humans and animals. I have experienced strong supportive evidence for this during my relationships with my own domestic pets. As the higher primates are undoubtedly our nearest relatives I am not at all surprised by the data presented here which seems to suggest that they have particularly strong links with us both on an emotional and primal level.

I am happy to recommend this book wholeheartedly.

In Search of Frankenstein - Exploring the myths behind Mary Shelley's monster by Radu Florescu (Robson £18.95)

At Christmas Christopher Frayling presented a scholarly TV series providing an insight into the truths behind the great icons of 20th Century horror movies.

The programme on Dracula was based very heavily on this author's excellent 'In search of Dracula', and I am pleased to say that the present volume on 'the modern Prometheus' is a worthy successor. Florescu is that rare beast, a genuine academic with a flair for telling a great story. I recommend this book to the horror movie buff and the literary historian alike.

In Search of Dracula - The enthralling story of Dracula and Vampires by Raymond McNally and Radu Florescu (299pp Robson £9.99)

No sooner had I written the above review than this timely reprint, which has been updated slightly arrived on my doormat. I cannot compare it with the original because that was one of the books that

disappeared with Alison during the ritual sharing out of the books and CDs. I am overjoyed to have it back on my shelves.

If anything this is even better than the Frankenstein volume reviewed above, but perhaps I am only saying this because I have always had a fascination with things undead. McNally and Florescu present a scholarly analysis of European vampire legends, but more importantly of Bram Stoker and his classic (and much maligned) novel.

They also present a harrowing and totally dispassionate account of the life and times of Vlad Dracul (aka Vlad Tepes aka Vlad the Impaler) the Romanian Historical Hero (!!!) who is often described as being the main historical influence behind the Dracula legends. I have always been fascinated to discover that Tepes is still seen as a culture hero amongst his Wallachian people, mainly because of the sterling work he did in resisting the incoming Turks.

If you examine the historical data given and then use it as background information to explain some of the Balkan conflicts of the 20th Century then contemporary history, from the Assassination of Franz Ferdinand to the ethnic cleansing of Srebrenica suddenly starts to make more sense.

The only thing that is sadly lacking is an examination of modern 'real' vampirism. I do not mean the loony cults based around third rate Goth bands, but more the predations of such entities as those which have been reported from Highgate Cemetery. This is where the concept of the vampire meets that of the forteen zoologist.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Let me just say here, (in order to forestall a torrent of angry letters from Richard Freeman and his friends - who will probably write a number of different letters each under a variety of undead pseudonyms - I actually quite like Goth music. What I object to is this rather tacky cult of pseudo vampirism based upon the somewhat over-rated novels of Anne Rice etc.

What is even more disturbing (as shown in the news pages of the latest issue of *The Goblin Universe*) is that in some people's minds fiction can blur into reality with tragic results. Vampire Love Cults are therefore not top of my agenda..

Charles Fort wrote about vampiric attacks on domestic livestock and such things have been linked with ABC and BHM phenomena as well as with more bizarre 'out of place' animals. I have written widely on the subject of such vampiric attacks, most notably in my book *The Owlman and Others* and believe that there is a definite link between them and such phenomena as cattle mutilation and the chupacabras.

Although it would have been nice to see some mention of such things in this book, it would be churlish not to give it my highest praise anyway!

V is for Vampire - The A-Z Guide to Everything Undead by David J.Skal (288pp Robson £10.99).

Without any attempt at a stupid joke (in the jugular vein) this book SUCKS! At least it does so on the first reading.

Like the 'new age' book reviewed above this book (which does indeed contain some fine and interesting material) suffers from that innate curse of modern-day publishing, in that its style once again outweighs its content, and this book's style is execrable.

The A-Z format is jokey and annoying (and quite often appears to be figuratively 'scraping the barrel' in search of cheap laughs and something to write about), and whilst there is some interesting stuff therein it is few and far between and padded out with annoying waffle.

Robson Books seem to be cornering the market in things vampiric at the moment, but they are doing themselves no favours by publishing twaddle like this. Unfortunately it will probably sell in bucketloads where the infinitely better tomes by

Florescu et al will languish in undeserved obscurity!

On the track of the Sasquatch by John Green (Hancock House 64pp £8.99)

Encounters with Bigfoot by John Green (Hancock House 64pp £8.99)

Two engaging little books by the author of the classic work on North American Man-Beasts *Apes amongst Us*. They are packaged as if they were intended for children but nevertheless contain a wealth of data on North American BHM phenomena. My biggest gripe with both these books is the same as my main bone of contention with Green's classic work - namely that he insists on trying to deal with the Bigfoot/Sasquatch mystery as if it can be explained within a purely zoological frame of reference.

He is not alone in this. Grover Krantz and many other luminaries of the transatlantic cryptozoological scene have followed the same lines of reasoning. It is not, however a path which I agree with. There is such a great body of evidence to suggest that some, but by no means all of such reports should be investigated as zooform phenomena rather than as flesh and blood crypids, that I feel that it is unwise not to do so.

This criticism apart, these two books are entertainingly presented and well written and should be on the bookshelves of any BHM enthusiast.

EDITORIAL NOTE: Unfortunately because of lack of space in this issue several regular features, including Neil Nixon's "Now that's what I call Crypto" and Graham Inglis's "Out of This World" as well as the Periodicals for Review page (also compiled by Senor Inglis ex-Civil Servant of this Parish), have been held over until the next issue.

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BARNABY, David & BENNETT, Clive: *The Reptiles of Belle Vue 1950-77*. 156pp A4 pb.

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BARNABY, David: *Quaggas and other zebras*

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FARRANT, D: *Beyond the Highgate Vampire*

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SHUKER, Dr K.P.N: *In Search of Prehistoric Survivors*. 192pp hb

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LEVER, Sir C. *They Dined on Eland*. 224 pp Illustrated

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CARTER, R. *Loch Ness - the Tour*. 22pp 1996. A good and useful guidebook to Loch Ness. £1.50

STEENBURG, T.N. *Sasquatch; Bigfoot - The Continuing Mystery*. 125pp 1993 Ed.

Excellent. Reviewed in A&M 10. Well worth getting for those interested in North American BHM phenomena. £ 10.00

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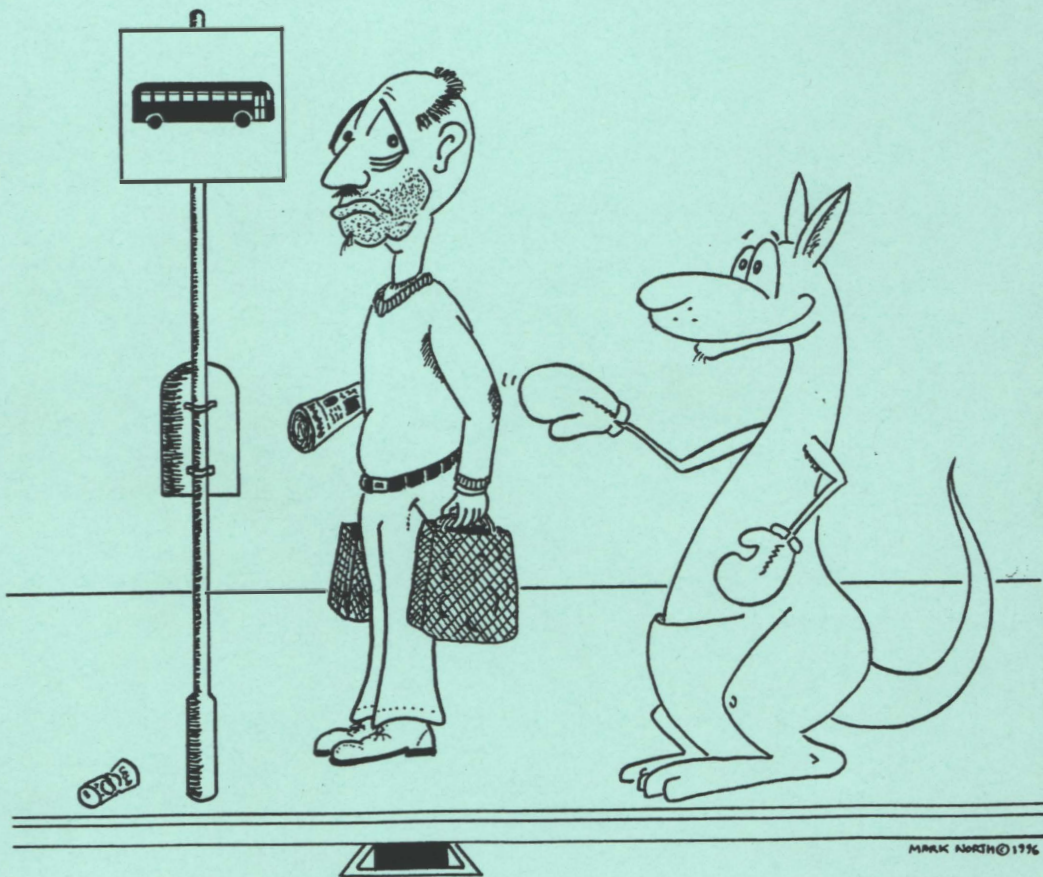
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